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REPORT ON THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION

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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. The outgoing President, H. E. Mr. Jacob Botwe Wilmot (Ghana), opened the session. He thanked the outgoing Bureau, delegations and staff who had enabled the successes of the Executive Board in 1998. He gave a brief overview of the activities of the Bureau since the third regular session 1998 and cited the landmark legislation adopted by the Board in 1998. Those decisions had pointed to the dedication and spirit of partnership of the Board that would ultimately make a difference in the lives of the real stakeholders, those people living in poor and uncertain conditions around the world. He was proud that the Board had always ensured that the least developed and other low-income countries had received priority attention.

2. The Executive Board elected the following members of the Bureau for 1999:

President:	H. E. Mr. Asda Jayanama (Thailand)
Vice President:	Ms. Jana Simonova (Czech Republic)
Vice President:	H. E. Dr. John W. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)
Vice President:	Ms. Anne Barrington (Ireland)
Vice President:	Mr. Aboubacar Dione (Guinea)

3. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President, H. E. Dr. John W. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda), presided over the meeting.

Agenda and work plan

4. The Secretary of the Executive Board elaborated on the elements contained in document DP/1999/L.1, the provisional agenda, list of documents and work plan for the session. She noted that all the official documents for the session had been posted on the Internet in the language of submission by 14 December 1998, six weeks before the beginning of the session. They were currently available in official languages. Conference room papers had also been posted on the Internet and were available in the three working languages. She noted that a corrigendum to document DP/1999/5 had been distributed.

5. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Administrative and Financial Services noted that document DP/1999/5 had initially been submitted for information only. However, it would now be reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and submitted to the Executive Board for approval. The corrigendum to document DP/1999/5 suggested how to proceed on the matter.

6. The Secretary noted that the work plan for the session had been distributed separately that morning and included the informal sessions to be held during the week. She underlined that the Secretariat had not received any request for a separate discussion of UNDP country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) or UNFPA country programmes before the Executive Board for adoption at the present session. However, time would be allowed for a general discussion on CCFs under item 4 and on UNFPA country programmes under item 10. Informal meetings were scheduled on UNDP activities in Myanmar, on the financial situation of UNFPA, and on the situation in Central America after Hurricane Mitch. The names of resident representatives present in New York during the session had been posted on the bulletin board. She also noted that a special exhibit had been put up on UNDP activities in Africa.

7. One delegation proposed that item 8 on financial, budgetary and administrative matters be postponed to the second regular session 1999.

8. The Executive Board approved the agenda and work plan for its first regular session 1999 (DP/1999/L.1) as amended.

9. The Executive Board approved the report of the third regular session 1998 (DP/1999/1).

Work plan 1999

10. The Secretary introduced the draft work plan for the Executive Board in 1999 (DP/1999/CRP.1). The work plan was based on the draft presented at the third regular session 1998 and took into account decisions taken at that session. The plan was designed to help to plan and rationalize more effectively the work of the Board, with increased specialization of the first and second sessions while maintaining a flexible approach. The agenda for the future sessions would be amended and completed on the basis of decisions taken at each previous session and in particular at the present session in relation to the follow-up to decision 98/23 on the UNDP funding strategy.

11. A major feature of the second regular session would be the funding event, as decided by the Executive Board in decisions 98/23 and 98/24 on UNDP and UNFPA funding strategies. As it appeared in the work plan for 1999, the second regular session was scheduled for 5 to 9 April. However, at the request of several delegations, the secretariat had looked into the possibility of changing the dates from 5 to 9 April to 12 to 16 April. The Commission on Sustainable Development had cancelled its meetings previously scheduled for that week and the delegations of Austria and India had informed the Secretariat that their Ambassadors agreed that the meeting co-chaired by them on Financing of Development would not be scheduled for the week of 12 to 16 April as previously envisaged.

12. Changes in the format of the annual report of the Administrator for 1998 were proposed by the secretariat, in order to make the report more analytical, shorter and easier to read. The present year should be considered as a transition year. The approach to the annual report of the following year would be reviewed in relation to the requirements of the multi-year funding framework. The special event to be held during the annual session 1999 of the Executive Board would be organized by UNDP. Following informal consultations with the Bureau, it was decided that the theme would be "Managing development in a globalized world". The High-Level Meeting on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries would be held from 1 to 4 June 1999 and its report transmitted to the annual session 1999 for information.

13. The third regular session 1999 was essentially a financial and budgetary session. The biennial budgets for UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS would be submitted. In the cases of UNDP and UNFPA, the biennial budgets would take fully into account the decisions of the Executive Board regarding the new funding strategies. The United Nations Capital Development Fund would report on the result of the evaluation of its performance over the past three years. Reports on reviews of CCFs undertaken in 1999 would be made available to the Executive Board at the third regular session 1999 or the first regular session 2000. A list of the reviews scheduled in 1999 was available to the Board.

14. The Executive Board agreed to reschedule its second regular session 1999 from 5-9 April 1999 to 12-16 April 1999.

15. One delegation requested that on page 5, section E, of the draft work plan, the words "including on funding" be replaced with "including resource goals". Another delegation requested that the theme of the special event 1999 include a specific focus on the role of UNDP.

16. The Executive Board approved the annual work plan 1999 for the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board as orally amended.

17. The Executive Board agreed to the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in 1999:

Second regular session 1999:	12-16 April 1999
Annual session 1999:	14-25 June 1999 (New York)
Third regular session 1999:	13-17 September 1999

18. The Executive Board agreed to the following tentative schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in 2000:

First regular session 2000:	24-28 January 2000
Second regular session 2000:	27-31 March 2000
Annual session 2000:	12-23 June 2000 (Geneva)
Third regular session 2000:	11-15 September 2000

19. The Executive Board agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the second regular session 1999 of the Board, as listed in the annex to decision 99/3.

Statement by the Administrator

20. The Administrator thanked the outgoing Bureau and members of the Executive Board and welcomed the new Bureau and incoming Board members. He introduced the new Associate Administrator, Mr. Zéphirin Diabré, who had taken up his duties on 15 January. He paid tribute to the outgoing Associate Administrator, Mr. Rafeeuddin Ahmed, who had served since October 1994. He also announced that Ms. Elena Martinez would take over as Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, replacing Mr. Fernando Zumbado, who had headed the Bureau for eight years.

21. The Administrator assured the Executive Board that during his remaining months with UNDP he would put all of his efforts into implementing the key legislation adopted by the Board in 1998. He noted the seriousness with which UNDP took the implementation of decision 98/23 on funding, the item that remained the organization's number one challenge. UNDP was committed to results. He thanked those countries that had increased or maintained their contributions to UNDP. He also briefed the Executive Board on the senior management meeting held from 18 to 20 November 1998 on UNDP and its future, on UNDP efforts regarding the Year 2000 (Y2K) problem, and announced a briefing to be held on UNDP and UNFPA activities regarding the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch.

22. The Associate Administrator stated that it was an honour to serve UNDP and the Administrator, who had done so much to combat poverty. He noted his appreciation for the work of his predecessor, whom he held in great esteem. He

was committed to advancing the cause of development and looked forward to working with the Executive Board.

23. One delegation announced that it would maintain its core contribution at the current level subject to final parliamentary approval. Some non-core contributions could be increased, again subject to final approval. Development was very important to his delegation, whose Government was presently advocating a new development strategy based on the concept of country ownership. The recent Tokyo International Conference on African Development II had been a great success. The speaker thanked UNDP for its constructive role as co-organizer.

24. One delegation, speaking as head of the Group of 77, praised the commitment to development of both the Administrator and the outgoing Associate Administrator. He underlined the importance of the funding meeting, which would highlight the commitments of Governments to UNDP. Input from UNDP for the Conference on Financing for Development would be welcome.

25. Another speaker proposed that the secretariat distribute a letter outlining the purpose and procedure to be followed for the funding meeting to be held at the second regular session 1999.

26. Another speaker noted that the documents presented at the current session were rather technical in nature. It would be more useful if the Executive Board gave more general policy guidance rather than becoming specialists in all areas of UNDP. He also emphasized the key role of the Executive Board in resource mobilization. The Board should avoid micro-management - less technical documentation would be a step in the right direction.

27. The Administrator stated that UNDP must maintain its basic principles, particularly with regard to the multi-year funding framework. UNDP had worked on defining its new mission and focus in recent years - one of the results was the change management process. However, funding remained the largest problem for the organization, and UNDP would indeed welcome an examination of the role of the Executive Board in funding, as suggested by one speaker. He affirmed that UNDP would like to work on an input to the Conference on Financing for Development.

Statement by the Executive Director

28. The Executive Director congratulated the new Bureau on its election and thanked the outgoing Bureau for its excellent guidance during 1998. She also noted the very good relationship that UNFPA had enjoyed with the outgoing Associate Administrator. She welcomed his successor and stated that UNFPA looked forward to working closely with him.

29. The Executive Director noted that the coming year would be an exciting yet very demanding one for UNFPA. The ICPD+5 process was intensifying as it entered the last six months of a two-year review and assessment. The Hague Forum would meet 8-12 February; the Preparatory Committee of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), 24-31 March; and the Special Session of the General Assembly, 30 June-2 July.

30. She updated the Executive Board on progress made by UNFPA on the multi-year funding framework called for in decision 98/24. In view of the nature and importance of the exercise, she had established an interdivisional working group

within the Fund to work on the framework and to prepare the conference room paper that would be submitted to the Board at its second regular session 1999. The working group had undertaken an extensive consultative process with others in the United Nations system as well as with development cooperation agencies to learn from their experiences in results-based approaches. The working group had also convened several highly productive workshops, both in-house and with the Fund's partners in the United Nations system, and was making sure that both headquarters and field offices were involved.

31. She observed that UNFPA had many of the elements of the framework in place but needed to link those elements within a comprehensive framework of results and resources. That would be done incrementally through an evolving four-year corporate plan that specified baselines at the beginning of the period and benchmarks to be achieved by the end of the period.

32. The Executive Director outlined some of the challenges and priorities of UNFPA for 1999. The central challenge was to implement well-designed and well-managed programmes. Another challenge was to ensure that all UNFPA country programmes had adequate baseline data and that systems were put in place to document, monitor, analyse and understand the progress made and results produced. Monitoring and evaluation were a top priority and a shared responsibility of all staff, as were accountability and oversight. The greatest challenge, however, was securing predictable, assured, continuous and increased resources. UNFPA had faith that its support could, and did, make a difference. But it also knew that it had to demonstrate that and show the results of the Fund's work. The Fund looked to the multi-year funding framework to help in that endeavour.

33. She introduced Ms. Thoraya Obaid to the Executive Board. Ms. Obaid, the newly appointed Director of the Division for Arab States and Europe, had brought with her extensive field experience and knowledge, having served for 23 years with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, most recently as Deputy Executive Secretary.

34. The Executive Director concluded by noting two milestones that held special significance for UNFPA: the arrival of the six billionth person on earth and the thirtieth anniversary of UNFPA, both to take place some time in October 1999.

35. Several delegations took the floor and expressed their appreciation for the Executive Director's comprehensive statement and offered congratulations on the upcoming thirtieth anniversary of the Fund. The delegation of Japan announced that its Government would maintain its 1999 contribution to UNFPA at its present level, subject to Diet approval. The delegation noted that its Government was a great supporter of UNFPA and had been the Fund's largest donor for a decade and would continue its close cooperation with UNFPA. The delegation welcomed the Fund's ICPD+5 activities and hoped that UNFPA would work together with the United Nations Population Division on preparations for the Special Session of the General Assembly. Another delegation welcomed the appointment of the new Director, Division for Arab States and Europe. One delegation was pleased to note the Fund's lead role in the ICPD+5 process. The delegation thanked the host country, UNFPA and other donors for making the Hague Forum possible. The delegation underscored that its country benefited greatly from the work of UNFPA and appealed to donors to continue to support the Fund generously.

36. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their comments and for the congratulatory wishes offered on the occasion of the Fund's forthcoming thirtieth anniversary. She assured the Executive Board that UNFPA was working very closely with the United Nations Population Division on all aspects of the ICPD+5 process, including preparation of the report of the Secretary-General. She welcomed the views of the new Board member concerning both the need for a greater focus on resource mobilization and a closer and more active involvement of the Board in mobilizing resources. She added that a number of donors were working with the Fund to help mobilize resources. She noted that with the change from the Governing Council to the Executive Board, the agenda was more focused and there was a trend to move away from micro-management. She stated that since the ICPD the Fund had held many important dialogues with the Board and had benefited greatly from the Board's guidance on such key issues as programme priorities, the allocation of resources, and the development of indicators. She added that the Fund was currently engaged in a very important exercise - the development of a multi-year funding framework, which was being prepared in response to a key decision (98/24) of the Board.

UNDP/UNFPA segment

II. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BOARD OF AUDITORS

UNDP

37. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Financial and Administrative Services (BFAS) introduced the report on an updated overview of the implementation of recommendations of the Board of Auditors, including an updated timetable (DP/1999/3) and the related comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (A/53/513). She noted that in nearly all cases, UNDP had reached agreement with the Board of Auditors on the substance of their recommendations and on the follow-up required. She elaborated in her statement on two issues: (a) the qualification of the UNDP accounts because of insufficient receipt of audit certificates of nationally executed projects and (b) the comments relating to UNDP investments in information systems and in consulting services to assist the change management process.

38. With regard to nationally executed projects, the Assistant Administrator noted that the difficulty in obtaining audit certificates was not a new issue and UNDP had been working very hard to address the concerns raised by the Board of Auditors. Recent efforts had led to significant progress, with the level of audited expenditures at 73 per cent for the past biennium as compared to 1990, when the level stood at 3 per cent. However, the elements of timing with regard to the report of the Board of Auditors and national capacity constraints needed to be taken into consideration. The new national execution guidelines, issued in May 1998, included the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, including capacity requirements, and allowed for a programme country government to involve a private sector audit firm when its own capacity was insufficient. UNDP planned to develop an action plan to deal with the unsatisfactory aspects reported in some nationally executed projects.

39. The Assistant Administrator informed the Executive Board that the Administrator was undertaking the investigation suggested by ACABQ with regard to obtaining value-for-money from investments in its information systems and

contracted services. The Administrator would report to ACABQ on its results later in the year. She noted in the context of those issues that the total amount spent on information management included, in addition to investment in software development, all equipment purchased, as well as services and salaries to maintain and operate the information technology platform in UNDP, both at headquarters and all non-headquarters locations, including country offices.

40. With regard to the change process, she clarified that the $4.4 million estimate quoted by the reports represented only the estimate for the design phase of the change process. When the change management plan was presented to the Executive Board at its annual session 1997, no specific figure was given for the costs for change since they were still being identified. The updated change implementation plan contained in document DP/1997/CRP.22 clarified that the 1998-1999 biennial budget would bear $5.8 million for the subregional resource facilities (SURFs) and $4 million for vacancy management, with remaining costs covered by the Swedish Trust Fund and contributions from donors, subject to negotiations with those parties.

41. Many delegations welcomed the report and expressed satisfaction with the follow-up measures.

42. Several speakers voiced their concern about the qualification of the UNDP account because of insufficient receipt of national execution audit certificates. One speaker, noting that the UNDP audit report had been qualified previously for the same reason, urged quick action to resolve the problem as it made it difficult for her Government to defend its contribution to UNDP in the national parliament. Another speaker requested further explanation of the high level of expenditures in the context of nationally executed projects. One speaker underlined the need for country offices to be fully trained with regard to cash management tools so that they could promote the self-reliance of programme countries in carrying out nationally executed projects. The new guidelines on national execution were welcomed.

43. One delegation underlined that there was no single mode of national execution as it varied according to national systems and circumstances. Another speaker urged the streamlining and standardization of modalities for choosing auditors at the country level.

44. Other subjects raised by delegations included the level of advances given to executing partners by UNDP, the intention of UNDP to investigate the role and duty of personnel at headquarters, and the Y2K issue.

45. The Assistant Administrator and Director, BFAS, responded to the queries raised. She noted that the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) had endorsed the guidelines for common premises and services and that those guidelines had then been sent to all resident coordinators. UNDP was in compliance with Y2K, including with regard to software development at headquarters and in country offices. UNDP had also looked into its relationships with banks and utilities and had taken the necessary steps with regard to Y2K. Further efforts in 1999 would be reported to the Executive Board.

46. With regard to the comments raised on the level of advances to contractors, the Assistant Administrator agreed that there should be a specific consultation with the Board of Auditors on that issue. She did not think a one-month benchmark

would be sufficient. She noted that changing the way advances were made, as suggested by one delegation, would be a major departure from existing practice with regard to United Nations specialized agencies. Moreover, the level of programme expenditure in that area was not large enough to merit the requisite effort needed to make a systemic change.

47. In response to a query raised, she noted that the Director of the Office for Audit and Performance Review would carry out the inquiries requested by ACABQ. The findings would be reported to ACABQ and made available to the Executive Board.

48. The Executive Board took note of the report on an updated overview of implementation of recommendations of the Board of Auditors, including an updated timetable (DP/1999/3).

UNFPA

49. The Executive Board had before it a report prepared in response to decision 97/2, entitled Follow-up to the Report of the Board of Auditors for 1996-1997: Status of Implementation of Recommendations (DP/FPA/1999/2). In introducing the report, the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) highlighted the key measures undertaken by UNFPA to implement the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, pertaining to, inter alia, financial procedures, programme management, property management, human resource management, and Y2K compliance.

50. During the discussion that followed several delegations took the floor and commented, inter alia, on issues concerning national execution; procurement; advances and outstanding disbursement reports; the UNFPA Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM); and Y2K compliance. One delegation took note of the fact that the UNFPA management had taken action, including close supervision of the concerned division, with regard to a procurement problem. Concerning the issue of outstanding advances, the delegation proposed that a reimbursement system be set up whereby the executing agencies would provide the advances and be reimbursed later. Such a system would encourage the executing agencies to be more prudent and careful in making advances. With regard to the issue of a balance between headquarters and field staff, the delegation emphasized that adequate expertise should be maintained at headquarters. The delegation wondered if that issue had been included in the terms of reference of the auditors.

51. Another delegation stated that it was satisfied with the follow-up actions taken in implementing the recommendations of the Board of Auditors; however, it was concerned that the opinion of the Board of Auditors was qualified because significant parts of the expenditure were not covered by audit certificates. The delegation called upon both UNDP and UNFPA to resolve those issues and underscored that such matters made it difficult for its Government to defend its contributions in budget negotiations. With regard to the ACABQ request for the special investigation of one procurement case at UNFPA, the delegation stated that the investigation provided an opportunity to reconfirm the atmosphere of trust that prevailed between the Executive Board and the Fund. Concerning project personnel employed at headquarters, the delegation advised that their role and duties should be examined. One delegation, while welcoming the follow-up undertaken in response to the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, asked when the standards and guidelines for premises-related expenditure would be established. The delegation also asked for a clarification on the issue of advances and disbursement reports.

52. One delegation, while noting the importance of finding solutions to national execution issues, within the existing rules and regulations, stressed that implementation would not be possible without adequate training of field office staff. Another delegation, while welcoming the participatory approach used in the preparation of the PPM, asked when the manual would be finalized. The delegation also asked what was being done in terms of enforcement regarding expediting the receipt of outstanding disbursement reports for non-governmental organization (NGO)-executed projects. Concerning project closure, the same delegation was pleased to note the progress made and inquired if some mechanism had been put in place to ensure timely closure of projects in the future. The delegation welcomed the workforce planning exercise under way and asked if the field offices were also involved. The delegation was pleased to note the steps taken by UNFPA to make its systems Y2K compliant. One delegation stated that the procedures for selecting auditors at the country level should be standardized and streamlined. The delegation wondered who should have the final say in the selection of auditors and noted that, in the interest of transparency and accountability, national authorities should be kept informed of the reasons for rejecting certain auditors. Another delegation noted with satisfaction the efforts made by UNFPA to comply with the recommendations of the Board of Auditors.

53. In his response, the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) thanked the delegations for their comments and noted that with regard to the procurement incident referred to by some delegations, it should be emphasized that the procurement in question concerned products that required specific creative and artistic talents that were difficult to quantify. Such procurement differed fundamentally from, for example, the procurement of medical equipment, contraceptive commodities or vehicles. Nevertheless, the Fund would continue to stress the need to apply strictly the established procedures for procurement. He noted that with regard to national execution, the issues were being addressed using a system-wide approach. Concerning the qualified opinion of the Board of Auditors, the Deputy Executive Director stated that the Fund was having discussions with the auditors on a revised system for certified project reports, which would require the submission of annual auditing plans. That would require changes in the Fund's financial rules, which UNFPA would present to the Executive Board at a later session. UNFPA would bring that before the Board at a later session in 1999. With reference to the finalization of the PPM, he noted that as a participatory process was being followed, it might be difficult, at that time, to provide a precise date; however, he anticipated that the administrative and financial manuals would be completed by September. Concerning the closure of projects, he stated that the Fund was exercising close monitoring and had an appropriate procedure in place. He informed the Board that the workforce planning exercise currently under way was assessing posts at headquarters during the first phase and would assess field office posts during its second phase. He expressed his appreciation for the comments made by delegations concerning the Fund's Y2K compliance. He agreed with the suggestion that procedures for the selection of auditors at the country level should be standardized and streamlined. He underscored that the selection at the country level was always made in consultation with the national authorities.

54. In response to the comments on advances and outstanding reimbursement reports, the Chief, Office of Oversight and Evaluation, stated that while 100 per cent compliance might not yet have been achieved, UNFPA was emphasizing strict adherence to the requirements for paying and controlling advances as set forth in the Finance Manual, including limiting advances to no more than one

quarter's expenditure. She noted that the internal auditors examined that regularly within the context of audits of UNFPA country offices. She observed that there was a need to strengthen capacity in the area of financial and cash management, particularly for staff in the country offices.

55. The Executive Board took note of Follow-up to the Report of the Board of Auditors for 1996-1997: Status of Implementation of Recommendations (DP/FPA/1999/2).

UNDP segment

III. PROGRESS REPORT ON UNDP 2001

56. The Administrator introduced the progress report on the implementation of change management (DP/1999/CRP.2). In his remarks, he highlighted the major achievements of the change management process and referred to those aspects where there had been delays or difficulties in implementation. He observed that there had been appreciable progress in all the key strategic issues since the launching of the programme in May 1997.

57. Referring to decentralization as the central theme of UNDP 2001, the Administrator stated that UNDP could fairly claim to be positioning itself as one of the most decentralized agencies in the development business. He cited examples of several 2001 initiatives that were contributing to that outcome, including the subregional resource facilities (SURFs), new streamlined programme and finance manuals, and new guidelines on national execution, collaboration with the private sector and on decentralized cost-sharing agreements.

58. The Administrator stated that several human resource policies approved by the UNDP Executive Committee during the course of 1998 would have a positive impact on the effectiveness of country offices. The national staff career management policy, the first of its kind in any United Nations system organization, would enhance the professional capabilities and career horizons of national staff. Phase 2 of the UNDP gender balance policy, which aimed to have a 4:6 women to men ratio by the year 2001, was contributing to enhancing the number of women staff members at all levels. For example, between 1995 and 1998, the number of female Assistant Administrators had tripled. During the same period, female staff at the D-2 level had exceeded the 20 per cent target. The number of women Resident Representatives had risen from 14 in 1996 to 30 in 1998.

59. The Administrator informed the Executive Board that UNDP was using a fast-track mechanism for the selection and deployment of staff in country offices in countries in special development circumstances. UNDP was moving ahead with its plan to introduce competency-based approaches to the staffing of other offices. The Administrator also explained that the growth in the number of staff at headquarters was due to an increasing number of contracts for activities of limited duration. Similar appointments had been made in the area of crisis response. He advocated that functions such as those were not always comparable to core posts and, therefore, there was a need to weigh their utility differently. He assured the Board that the 2000-2001 budget strategy would include measures for managing staff growth at headquarters.

60. The Administrator also reviewed information contained in the conference room paper on systems improvements, noting that all headquarters staff had access to the internet, and that 125 country offices had internet access, with 64 connected internally by intranet.

61. Other areas covered by the Administrator included problems in carrying out the five-day response mandate for requests from country offices, building an accountability culture in UNDP, and the contribution of UNDP to the overall United Nations reform process through the United Nations Development Group and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework exercise.

62. Many delegations made favourable comments on the quality of document DP/1999/CRP.2, noting in particular its candid approach to bringing out accomplishments while acknowledging slow progress in some of the change-management initiatives. Several speakers considered the document to be informative and balanced and therefore credible. Delegations also welcomed the Administrator's invitation to seek guidance and suggestions to move the change management process forward, thus ensuring that UNDP would be fully equipped to respond to the new results reporting system under the multi-year funding framework (MYFF).

63. Some delegations highlighted the importance of the role of UNDP in disaster prevention and mitigation, and appreciated the organization's work in the mine-action programme. The fast-track staff support to crisis countries was welcomed. The Administrator responded that UNDP should enhance its resource support to natural disaster mitigation through concerned national Governments. One speaker requested that UNDP share its programme and other manuals with Member States so that national Governments could become fully conversant with the new systems. In the context of the proposed resource and results framework, several delegations emphasized the need for realignment of the manuals to the new framework.

64. One delegation requested information on how UNDP would achieve the target of deploying 25 per cent of its headquarters staff to country offices. In response, the Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Planning and Resource Mobilization, stated that vigorous efforts would be made in the context of the strategy for the 2000-2001 budget.

65. Some speakers underlined the important role of the SURFs in the development process of the programme countries and suggested that coordination of their activities be strengthened to ensure optimal use of such technical resources. It was suggested that UNDP undertake an impact study of the SURF mechanism at a future time in order to determine its actual and real potential for system-wide application. The Assistant Administrator, Bureau of Planning and Resource Management (BPRM), assured the delegations that UNDP was mindful of the impact assessment and a thorough assessment will be carried out in due course with client satisfaction in mind.

66. Several delegations praised the higher degree of national execution of UNDP activities, a factor that had implications for capacity-building in the programme countries. Issues such as decentralization and delegation, greater accountability measures, increased use of information technology, national staff management and the gender-balance policy were recognized as important accomplishments in the context of UNDP 2001.

67. Several speakers requested that UNDP focus greater attention on the slow moving issues of UNDP 2001 referred to by the Administrator and contained in document DP/1999/CRP.2. Progress on those issues should be highlighted in future reports.

68. Some delegations emphasized the need for the resident coordinator to pay increased attention to emergency assistance programmes, food security, gender and development. In that context, it was important that through decentralization, the resident coordinator be given more flexible controls in order to provide support to programme countries. The Administrator explained that in countries with special development situations, resident coordinators had been advised to devote their time fully to the resident coordinator function in order to respond effectively to the needs of the system. In such cases, the UNDP senior deputy resident representative assumed responsibility for management of UNDP programme activities.

69. The Executive Board took note of the progress report on the implementation of change management (DP/1999/CRP.2).

IV. COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS

Successor programming arrangements

70. The Administrator introduced conference room paper DP/1999/CRP.3, which provided the information requested in decision 98/19 on the review of the successor programming arrangements. He stated that it was imperative to reach a decision at the current session in order to resolve the difficulties that had arisen in applying the approved targeted for resources assignment from the core (TRAC) distribution model, so that countries could proceed with future programme planning.

71. Of the various options presented in document DP/1999/CRP.3, the Administrator stated that adjusting the gross national product (GNP) per capita breakpoint between low- and middle-income countries from $750 to $900 most closely adhered to the main principles of programme resource allocation in UNDP. That option ensured enhanced focus on low-income countries and least developed countries, many of them located in Africa, where UNDP had always concentrated the bulk of its resources. Furthermore, the option also safeguarded the principle of a gradual move to net contributor country (NCC) status for countries that achieved a higher GNP per capita, since it allowed floor provisions for the middle-income group to be met.

72. The Administrator reaffirmed the principle of universality and underlined the important role that UNDP played in NCCs through the resident coordinator system and participation in self-financed development activities. In the long run, he expected that involvement to lead to a more significant level of voluntary contributions from the NCCs. He noted the importance of safeguarding the role of NCCs within the UNDP family and invited the Executive Board to provide guidance on the issue of NCC thresholds. In that regard, he referred to the explanation contained in document DP/1999/CRP.3 regarding the marginal financial impact of an adjustment to the threshold.

73. The more-than-forty delegations taking the floor noted that the high quality of document DP/1999/CRP.3 as well as the discussions in informal consultations constituted a solid platform for deliberations on the successor programming arrangements. Most speakers stated that it was important to reach a decision at the current session. Many representatives of programme countries cited examples of the positive impact of cooperation with UNDP. A number of speakers from NCCs noted the need to maintain momentum for development in graduating countries and the need to pursue technical cooperation among developing countries more actively.

74. The majority of speakers supported adjusting the GNP per capita breakpoint between low and middle-income countries in the TRAC distribution model from $750 to $900. Some delegations noted that the proposed figure compensated only partially for inflation since the last adjustment in 1985, and was comparable to the current International Development Association (IDA) figure. One delegation noted that the 88 per cent share of TRAC allocated to low-income countries as defined by a $750 GNP per capita breakpoint was considered a comparative advantage of UNDP and should, therefore, not be treated in an ad hoc manner.

75. The use of 1997 basic data in the TRAC calculation model was generally supported. Many speakers, recalling that alternatives to GNP and population data had been reviewed as background to decision 95/23, suggested that future reviews of the successor programming arrangements also examine parameters that might serve as supplementary indicators of poverty and the need for development assistance. It was noted that the revised breakpoint option was consistent with the focus on low-income countries and least developed countries, especially in Africa. A number of delegations reiterated the importance of reaching the target of $1.1 billion in contributions to core resources per year if those allocations were to be attained in absolute terms, with some of the speakers suggesting measures that would guarantee such allocations.

76. Most delegations taking the floor indicated that the NCC threshold should be maintained at its current $4,700 GNP per capita level, with some noting that it had been increased to that level under decision 95/23. Hence, a decrease would ignore recent inflation levels. One speaker suggested an increase in line with the current World Bank figure of $5,400 GNP per capita.

77. Several delegations were in favour of lowering the threshold to $4,000 GNP per capita, with some stating that a decreased level would counterbalance the proposed increase in the breakpoint between low- and middle-income countries and reflect the emphasis of UNDP on progressivity, especially when faced with resource constraints. Those speakers who took note of the treatment of NCCs as a separate group and the elimination of reimbursable TRAC beyond the three-year grace period were supportive of such changes, with several requesting clarification of the proposed local reimbursable revolving TRAC and its impact on both NCCs and UNDP. A few representatives underlined that conditionalities on NCC voluntary contributions would not be acceptable.

78. Several speakers indicated that the analysis on NCCs in document DP/1999/CRP.3 was insufficient to examine the richness of and interest in the issues involved, and had been overshadowed by deliberations on the breakpoint between low- and middle-income countries. Those delegations supported a more comprehensive examination of the issues relating to NCCs in future reviews of the successor programming arrangements.

79. A few delegations stated that it was premature to consider the programming implications of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) on the basis of its pilot phase. They stressed the need for government participation in the UNDAF process and supported its important role in aid coordination.

80. The Administrator and the Assistant Administrator, BPRM, responded to questions raised by delegations. It was noted that future reviews of both the NCC issue and the parameters of the TRAC distribution methodology would be useful. It was clarified that the change in reimbursable TRACs involved very small sums of money but would result in greater administrative simplicity and transparency. The level of the local revolving fund mechanism would be established with the government at the country level for the purpose of programme planning. No changes were proposed in NCC government local office costs arrangements, a matter that would normally emerge in the context of the biennial support budget, scheduled as an item for discussion by the Executive Board at its third regular session 1999.

81. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

99/2. Successor programming arrangements

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the additional information on the review of the successor programming arrangements contained in document DP/1999/CRP.3;

2. Recalls that in its decision 98/19, the Executive Board, inter alia:

(a) Decided to apply the various financial planning parameters of decision 95/23 for the years 2000-2001, including the provisions of paragraph 25;

(b) Endorsed the proposed extension of the percentage earmarkings for programme resources set out in decision 95/23 with certain modifications from 2001 onwards (as specified in paragraph 4 of decision 98/19); and

(c) Reaffirmed the basic methodology for the distribution of resources as described in paragraphs 21-26 of decision 95/23 as the basis for calculating target for resource assignments from the core line 1.1.1 (TRAC-1) earmarkings for individual countries, as well as for overall TRAC allocations, with certain modifications from the year 2001 (as specified in paragraph 5 of decision 98/19);

3. Reaffirms, as basic principles for the allocation of programme resources in accordance with paragraphs 21-26 of decision 95/23: the focus on the low-income and least developed countries; progressivity in favour of the low-income countries; and a gradual move to net contributor status and graduation for countries that achieve higher levels of gross national products;

4. Decides to use 1997 or latest available gross national product per capita and population data in the calculation of TRAC-1 earmarkings for the years 2001-2003;

5. Decides to adjust the gross national product per capita breakpoint delineating the low- and middle-income countries from $750 to $900;

6. Expresses concern that unless there is early attainment of the target of $1.1 billion, the focus on low-income countries and least developed countries in terms of impact would not be attained and requests the Administrator to propose to the Board ways and means to redress any shortfall in the target;

7. Recognizes the important contribution that UNDP brings to supporting net contributor countries in their pursuit of the objectives of sustainable human development;

8. Decides that UNDP should consider net contributor countries as a separate group of programme countries outside the TRAC distribution model;

9. Endorses the proposal to eliminate the system of reimbursable TRAC earmarkings with effect from 2001, subject to the following provisions:

(a) First-time net contributor countries will continue to receive, for a grace period of three years, a TRAC-1 calculated at 60 per cent of the earmarking of the previous period;

(b) First-time net contributor countries will continue to benefit from the waiver of Government local office costs during the grace period of three years;

(c) After the grace period, reimbursement of the country office costs shall be ensured by the net contributor country through a flexible mix of instruments;

(d) UNDP must consult with Governments on costs associated with the UNDP local office structure;

(e) Whenever there should be a Resident Representative and a Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP should continue to cover the cost;

10. Also endorses the proposed establishment in all interested net contributor countries of a locally reimbursed revolving TRAC (LRRT), providing a flexible and responsive tool for UNDP support as follows:

(a) The initial outlay to the LRRT in a new net contributor country in the three-year grace period will be funded from its TRAC-1 earmarking. For an existing net contributor country, the initial outlay will be funded by the net contributor country itself. Any outlays under the LRRT will be subsequently reimbursed from government or third-party cost-sharing contributions;

(b) The LRRT will be used as seed funding for the initiation of UNDP non-core development activities;

(c) The level and use of the funding will be discussed and agreed to at the country level;

(d) All UNDP rules, regulations and procedures will continue to apply, including the elaboration of a country cooperation framework for approval by the Executive Board;

11. Decides to maintain the current gross national product per capita thresholds for net contributor countries at $4,700;

12. Requests the Administrator to proceed with the calculation of TRAC-1 earmarkings in accordance with the provisions of the present decision and of paragraphs 4 and 5 of decision 98/19, using 1997 or the latest available data, and on this basis to proceed with programme planning and implementation for the period 2001-2003;

13. Also requests the Administrator to submit to the Executive Board, at its annual session 2002, a report on possible improvements of the present TRAC resource distribution model, including a review of thresholds.

29 January 1999

Country cooperation frameworks

82. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation frameworks for Kenya (DP/CCF/KEN/1), Madagascar (DP/CCF/MAG/1), Niger (DP/CCF/NER/1), Tajikistan (DP/CCF/TAJ/1), and Suriname (DP/CCF/SUR/1). While the secretariat had not received a formal request from members of the Executive Board for a separate discussion of any of the CCFs, the Vice President opened the floor for a discussion of a general nature.

83. Delegations that took the floor welcomed and supported the five CCFs approved by the Executive Board at its current session. Their general evaluation was that the existing programmes were of good quality and specifically targeted the needs of the countries discussed. One delegation commended the information on cooperation with other United Nations organizations as well as multilateral and bilateral donors in the CCFs, either in the context of the UNDAF, as in the case of Kenya and Madagascar, or otherwise.

84. One delegation noted the importance of applying Executive Board decision 98/1 of 23 January 1998 on the eight guiding principles fully in CCFs and mid-term reviews from 1999 forward: the CCFs presented at the current session were a step in the right direction but there was still quite some way to go. The delegation would therefore appreciate an assessment from the UNDP secretariat on the progress made to date in implementing the decision and an indication of the steps taken towards full appliance.

85. One delegation, referring to the CCF for Kenya, wondered whether the national poverty eradication plan could serve as a realistic basis for the activities envisaged. The delegation had also taken note with some concern that UNDP planned to establish a secretariat in the Ministry of Finance. The delegation believed that UNDP was aware that such an office might run counter to the enhancement of national execution capabilities and therefore advised UNDP to limit the secretariat's activities strictly to national capacity-building. The

speaker encouraged UNDP to strengthen cooperation and coordination with other donors in the field further and expand its reporting on these activities, not only in an aggregate manner but also in the context of individual CCFs.

86. Based on a report from its mission in the field, another delegation noted that coordination among United Nations specialized agencies had improved. The United Nations Resident Coordinator was effective and steps were being taken to implement the UNDAF. The UNDP themes of governance and environmental initiatives were timely in the Kenyan economic and political context.

87. One delegation concurred with the analysis of the situation contained in the CCF for Madagascar and supported the focus on priority areas identified by the Government together with UNDP. In particular, her delegation considered that in the area of good governance and in the strengthening of the autonomous provinces, UNDP could bring to bear its comparative advantage. In the implementation of the environmental plan of action, UNDP also had an important role to play. In that respect, the speaker asked UNDP to work towards greater interdependency of all activities in the areas relevant to the sustainable exploitation of natural resources in, inter alia, agriculture, forestry and fishery.

88. Another delegation observed that if the long-term objective of the CCF for Madagascar was indeed to combat poverty, it was certainly a good idea to focus activities in the field on the most underprivileged areas. In particular, the specific areas of independence and the effectiveness of justice were at the heart of any creation of a State with the rule of law; but the strategy and the thematic areas in the CCF needed to reflect that better. Turning to national coordination, the speaker pointed out that there might be a danger of duplication and weakening of some of the national administrative structures. In the entire process, he noted, proper coordination by the Government was irreplaceable.

89. The delegation of Madagascar welcomed the approval of its first CCF. The Executive Board's decision was true encouragement for the Government in its difficult task to combat poverty and to achieve sustainable human development, in accordance with its overall policy, its economic policy framework document, its national strategy to combat poverty and the UNDAF. The CCF reflected the desire of the Government and UNDP to strengthen their ties of cooperation, which dated back almost 40 years. The delegation was convinced that the new programme would inject new dynamism into that cooperation - a factor to which the Government attached particular importance. The delegation expressed its gratitude to UNDP for its invaluable support for the multidimensional development of the country and its thanks to all of Madagascar's development partners for the contributions they had made towards the economic and social progress of the country.

90. One delegation welcomed the UNDP focus on the four priority areas requiring particular attention in the development process of Niger. The delegation of Niger welcomed the approval of its first CCF. The speaker stated that it was an important phase and expressed his Government's appreciation for the valuable assistance provided by UNDP in the electoral and the decentralization processes under way in Niger and in the process to strengthen peace in the country.

91. One delegation particularly welcomed the UNDP intention to contribute to the recovery and reconstruction of Tajikistan, a conflict-ridden country. The

delegation supported the participatory approach taken in consultation with all parties involved. It believed that UNDP activities would be an important contribution to stabilization and peaceful development in the post-conflict situation.

92. Two speakers whose Governments were guarantors of the implementation of the General Agreement on Establishing Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan (General Agreement) took the floor in support of the CCF. The approval of the CCF for Tajikistan would mean that the role of UNDP in resolving the current social and economic problems would grow tangibly. They noted that the most important element of the CCFs in the region was an active, peaceful process aimed at strengthening national harmony and agreement. Many of the components of the CCF for Tajikistan in particular were factors that would ultimately have a beneficial influence on creating a favourable political process and functioning national institutions in the country's transition from relief assistance to reconstruction and development. Another speaker observed that the programme had broad significance, and any assistance to help to stabilize the situation in Tajikistan would have a beneficial impact on all the countries of the region, and in that connection, all of the countries of the region would watch the development of the programme very closely. One speaker took the opportunity to express his delegation's satisfaction for the dynamic development of cooperation between the regional office and his Government. Several speakers underlined that the implementation of the programme and reaching the CCF goals would very much depend on the availability of the necessary resources. Mobilization of resources, including the strengthening of staff, was of paramount importance in keeping the country on the path of peace and stability.

93. Based on information obtained from its mission in the field, one delegation reported that its Government's development agency had a strong collaborative and innovative relationship with UNDP in Tajikistan. It appeared that UNDP projects in areas of civil strife were well implemented and beneficial to the populations living there.

94. The delegation of Tajikistan stated that the approval by the Executive Board of the first CCF for Tajikistan was a landmark. The group of countries with transitional economies had grown, covering a population of more than 400 million, providing an international, interactive basis for the provision of technical cooperation that made it possible to respond appropriately to the needs of the large region. The approval included clear principles and priorities determining both the specifics of the present stage of the peace process and the reforms being undertaken in Tajikistan, as well as the generally recognized rules of assistance for programme development. The inclusion of a State in regional and global development was the basis on which all country programmes should be built. That approach responded fully to the fundamental principles of equality and justice of the United Nations. The value of the CCF for Tajikistan lay in its close links to national strategic goals, which were aimed at strengthening the peace process in Tajikistan as the fundamental condition for the long-term stable development of human potential in the country. It was important that the programme responded to the spirit and goal of the resolution entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and rehabilitation in Tajikistan", adopted by the General Assembly on 7 December 1998. The delegation expressed its sincere gratitude to the Administrator and the Regional Director of Europe and the Commonwealth of

Independent State as well as to the UNDP Resident Representative in his capacity of United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for the valuable assistance that they had provided in preparing the first CCF for Tajikistan. The joint work was a serious investment in the cause of peace in Tajikistan, and the country was grateful to the Executive Board for its support.

95. One delegation noted that the Suriname programme, at one time functioning with great success, appeared to have been adversely affected by the lack of a local UNDP manager or UNDP representative. It seemed that the programme had changed and was now being managed from Trinidad and Tobago. The delegation's embassy had reported that the donor community in the area viewed Suriname's programme as lacking in clear policy priorities or responsiveness to opportunities in the areas of governance and environmental initiatives. However, the delegation's representatives also reported that UNDP officials had been taking steps during the previous year to address those concerns. If UNDP had made the decision to run its Suriname project regionally, that decision was definitely in line with many of the priorities the Board had established. However, the delegation would ask UNDP to consider such possible consequences as resources to build up the programme and the availability of outside experts to share costs when making staffing decisions in the future, so that strong, established programmes could continue with a minimum of disruption.

96. The delegation of Suriname took the floor to express the sincere appreciation of its Government to the members of the Executive Board for their decision to approve the first CCF for Suriname. UNDP had been active in Suriname for some time, however, without the presence of a CCF designed to support the development policies of the Government. Although UNDP actions in the past had helped both the Government and the non-governmental sector to address a variety of problems and issues, it was understood that the absence of a cooperation framework designed to assist the Government in achieving its development goals could be seen as hampering efforts to maximize the benefits of cooperation with UNDP. The current cooperation framework addressed the issue and would set the tone for a new, sustained relation between UNDP and Suriname. Suriname, with its enormous developmental potential, based on its natural resource endowment, its human resources and the commitment of its Government to sustainable development, warranted extensive interaction with the operational institutions of the United Nations system, in particular UNDP. Thus, the delegation hoped that UNDP and other operational institutions of the United Nations system would take a long-term view of the country and its potential. The successful implementation of the CCF would also depend partly on the willingness of some of Suriname's development partners to provide part of the necessary financial means. The delegation sincerely hoped that the merit of the CCF and the goals it would achieve if successfully implemented would be the only factors in providing that support.

97. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa thanked the delegations that had commented on the CCFs presented and approved at the current session of the Board for Africa, as well as for the general comments that were made on the CCF process. In Kenya, UNDP realized that there was a need to strengthen the secretariat in the Ministry of Finance, with an appropriate exit strategy, as noted in the CCF. As to whether the poverty plan could serve as a basis for UNDP cooperation in Kenya, UNDP needed a national programme of

cooperation with which it could carry out its activities; even though the poverty plan was new, the Government had every intention of implementing that plan, and UNDP intended to work with the Government to strengthen their capacity to do so. UNDP had been pleased to hear consistently during the current session comments reflecting work with UNDP in reports from the field. The organization welcomed field-level feedback from agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development as an opportunity to enhance and strengthen UNDP work with all partners. On the issue of the guiding principles, as a participant in the policy bureau where the guiding principles were promulgated - the Assistant Administrator wished to note that the principles were not new - many had been already applied widely and continued to be applied in the case of CCFs. She also noted that the African countries participating in pilot common country assessments and UNDAFs were doing very well - the guiding principles, the programme approach and work on lessons learned were all in force. However, it had to be said that UNDP would appreciate more assistance in applying the results-oriented framework. Training, refocusing and reorientation of UNDP staff would be necessary to ensure that they understand thoroughly what results-orientation work really meant and what skills were required. On the issue of aid coordination for Madagascar, it was important to note that the CCF stated that UNDP would support the Government's capacity for aid coordination; UNDP was not setting up a separate aid coordination mechanism outside of the Government.

98. The Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean expressed his appreciation for the comments on the CCF for Suriname, particularly the expressions of support UNDP experienced in the preparation of the CCF from the Government of Suriname. He also acknowledged the comments of the delegation that had voiced concern over the lack of a coordinated and coherent UNDP presence in the country. He noted that the approval of the CCF for Suriname was the first step towards having a more coordinated and coherent presence in which to collaborate with the Government of Suriname. UNDP shared the concern of the Executive Board that UNDP did not have a sufficient critical mass of core resources to establish a fully-fledged office in that country. UNDP was currently completing an agreement with the Government to set up a sub-office. A locally recruited UNDP manager was in place to manage UNDP operations in Suriname under the overall guidance of the Resident Representative/Resident Coordinator in Trinidad and Tobago. UNDP was looking forward to discussions that would allow it to establish a better presence in the country, based on the necessary critical mass of resources. UNDP was working towards a United Nations team concept within the local office in Suriname; among other organizations, the United Nations Children's Fund was present in the office to provide the backstopping for major programmes that was very much needed. Locally, UNDP hoped that the contacts with the United States embassy in Suriname, among others, would allow UNDP to provide more support for the development process of the country. The Deputy Assistant Administrator observed that he would be very happy to report to the Board at some future time that UNDP had the critical mass of resources sufficient to have a fully-fledged office in Suriname.

V. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

99. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs delivered a statement on progress in the implementation of the

UNDP corporate communication and advocacy strategy, as requested in decision 98/15. He elaborated on the 10-point agenda for the strategy discussed at the annual session 1998. He noted that in its decision 98/23 on the UNDP funding strategy, the Executive Board had endorsed the efforts to enhance the impact of the advocacy and information strategy. In that regard, the communications and advocacy strategy would be aligned with the funding strategy and multi-year funding framework. The target times for achieving the strategy's goals differed and the approach would need to be fine-tuned as time went on. There were three questions to be asked of actions undertaken in communication and advocacy: would the actions increase understanding of what UNDP stands for and does, increase support for UNDP and increase resources for UNDP? In meeting those challenges, UNDP would work in partnership with the Executive Board. He praised the efforts of the team lead by the Director of the Division of Public Affairs as well as those involved in communication and advocacy in the regional bureaux and country offices, noting that they had demonstrated tremendous commitment to fulfilling the strategy's goals.

100. The Director of the Division of Public Affairs reviewed progress in implementing the communications and advocacy strategy during the period June to December 1998 in the key communication areas. He noted that the overall aim of the strategy was to improve the visibility and impact of UNDP by promoting efforts in the world's poorest communities to meet the organization's overall goals. Since the adoption of the strategy, UNDP had made significant progress in raising the profile of the organization. However, the shrinking resource base posed a major constraint in meeting information needs and demands in promoting a better understanding of the role, activities and impact of UNDP.

101. The Director noted that substantial efforts were being made to develop a communications culture at all levels and locations of the organization. UNDP was especially conscious of the need for information multipliers - journalists, newspapers and broadcasters - who would transmit information to an infinite number of listeners or readers. The use of electronic communications was essential. In response to current trends, UNDP had shifted its work in public affairs to advance an active radio and television strategy in addition to its work with print media. Advocacy and constituency-building, special events and helping to shape the media agenda were other focus areas of the strategy.

102. A major effort had been made to update key public information materials and data to reflect the reform of UNDP, its leadership role in the United Nations Development Group, and action in pursuit of its main goals. Monitoring of media use of UNDP information materials was another important action undertaken in connection with the strategy. The Division of Public Affairs worked closely with the United Nations Department of Information in sharing information and providing guest experts for press briefings. UNDP made special efforts to get the organization's viewpoint heard through opinion pages and through interviews with its senior management by mass media.

103. The main challenge in implementing the strategy was linked to the overall shrinking of development assistance in donor countries and the competition among funds and programmes for limited resources. Adequate funding for advocacy and communications activities was critical for the successful implementation of the strategy. Specifically, additional resources were needed for sharpening messages,

expanding media consciousness, expanding outreach, increasing language translation of materials, and expanding efforts toward monitoring, evaluation and audience targeting.

104. Delegations taking the floor thanked the secretariat for the oral presentations. Many stated that they welcomed the progress in elaborating the strategy and the 10-point agenda and looked forward to the next discussion on the subject at the annual session 1999.

105. Several speakers emphasized the need for UNDP to target its audience very carefully. One delegation underlined that it was essential in programme countries to use communications techniques that would reach the rural poor in addition to government officials and other elite groups. To reach the masses, the use of radio and newspapers was suggested and the importance of conveying messages in local languages was stressed. UNDP had to inform its beneficiaries about what it was doing at the country level. One delegation queried whether UNDP was working with multinational corporations in programme countries. In donor countries, targeting of material to parliamentarians, media or government officials necessitated varying approaches. The targeting of critical decision-makers through themes in which UNDP had a comparative advantage, such as governance and poverty eradication, was emphasized. It was crucial to determine substrategies in countries and with relation to particular groups. In that regard, several outreach strategies could be used in parallel.

106. Several speakers agreed that the communications and advocacy strategy and the funding strategy were indeed linked. One delegation noted that the communications strategy should precede the funding strategy, as publicity about the effectiveness of UNDP could lead to increased contributions.

107. Several delegations noted the improvement in raising public awareness about UNDP. Examples of successful instruments were the Human Development Report, the Goodwill Ambassadors, the Azimuths television series, and publications such as Choices, particularly the issue on human rights, and the 1998 Poverty Report. Some speakers underlined that those products could be even more widely distributed. UNDP needed to ensure that its success stories were publicized. Several delegations praised the usefulness of the journalists' trips organized by UNDP.

108. Several speakers underlined the necessity of having adequate funding to carry out the communications and advocacy strategy. One delegation advocated that UNDP examine the level of resources devoted to the strategy, including personnel, at the annual session 1999. Information on the relative weight of those resources to overall resources of the organization and the historical facts and figures of resources devoted to information should be included to promote a useful discussion.

109. One delegation referred to a recent presentation to the Executive Board by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States on its 1999 programme of activities as a positive example of outreach that should be emulated by other UNDP regional bureaux. That speaker also expressed appreciation for the continued briefing and dialogue with the Executive Board members in New York by the Division of Public Affairs.

110. Several speakers requested information on whether an impact assessment on communications and advocacy in UNDP had been undertaken.

111. The Assistant Administrator and Director, BREA, informed the Executive Board that the comments would be taken into account in preparing the written report for the annual session 1999. In response to a query, he noted that the eleventh point, on communications with the Executive Board, discussed at the annual session 1998, had been subsumed under point 10, i.e., the provision of more analytical reports to the Board. He agreed with the speaker who had stated that the communications and advocacy strategy should precede the funding strategy but underlined that resources were needed at the country level to reach the poorest sectors of society. The views of the Board were welcomed with regard to audience targeting. UNDP was moving to providing increased translations of materials into local languages.

112. The Director of the Division of Public Affairs underlined the importance of the communications culture in UNDP. He noted that the strategy had to go beyond resource mobilization. In response to the queries raised, he cited the development of a detailed workplan that included substrategies for donor and programme countries. With regard to generating support and resources, it was understood that UNDP sought support for its work through the mobilization of positive public opinion, political will and through financial resources. UNDP would do that through illustrating the effectiveness of its programmes, demonstrating its identity as a leading global advocate and as a knowledge centre about sustainable human development and through promoting special events that highlighted its work. The Director underlined the work UNDP was undertaking with respect to audience targeting, outreach to media, and training of staff. UNDP would undertake audience research and monitoring and evaluation of its strategy and would appreciate guidance from the Executive Board. He noted that Choices would now be on-line electronically to enlarge its audience.

113. The Executive Board took note of the oral presentations on progress in the implementation of the UNDP corporate communication and advocacy strategy and of the comments made thereon by delegations.

VI. SPECIAL FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

114. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) introduced the report on activities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Montreal Protocol, the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO), and the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration (UNRFNRE), DP/1999/4.

115. The managing director of the Global Mechanism, established to promote resource mobilization for the International Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification (CCD), provided an update on the activities of the Global Mechanism.

116. Delegations taking the floor welcomed the report and commended it for providing a good overview of UNDP activities in the funds and programmes under discussion. While citing the important contribution of the funds to UNDP

activities in the area of environment, several speakers supported the mainstreaming of environment in all areas of UNDP work. One delegation suggested that climate change and biodiversity should be important elements of the country cooperation frameworks. Other delegations requested further explanation about the broad strategy of the Bureau for Development Policy and its plans to mainstream environment in UNDP programmes.

117. The Assistant Administrator, BDP, acknowledged that the mainstreaming of environment in UNDP activities needed strengthening and noted that UNDP was planning workshops and other activities to address that issue through various processes, including round tables, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, country cooperation frameworks, training and capacity-building. She noted that UNDP would elaborate on that topic in the annual report of the Administrator at the annual session 1999. The Director of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Division (SEED) stated that the purpose of the BDP broad strategy was to ensure that programmes supported by UNDP addressed both developmental and environmental concerns and, secondly, to guarantee that all global environmental issues were incorporated in UNDP work. He highlighted some of the steps UNDP had taken to mainstream environment in all its activities. Those measures included the creation of SEED, in which all environment-related units were housed in one division, the placement of 41 sustainable development advisors in country offices, and the development of environment management guidelines. He also reiterated the importance SEED placed on mainstreaming and as examples cited the allocation of funding in the global programme and collaboration with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) in helping to advance work in that area.

Montreal Protocol

118. Several delegations commended the good work being done by UNDP under the Montreal Protocol for the protection of the global ozone layer, and praised the cooperation of UNDP with the other implementing agencies of the Fund. One delegation suggested that there be an easier-to-read format for the presentation of information on total pledges as compared to income received, and asked that information on projects be divided into completed, ongoing and future categories to show what remained to be done under the national programmes. Another delegation commended UNDP for its excellent partnership in assisting bilateral donors to implement technology transfer programmes to help programme countries to eliminate ozone-depleting substances. Questions were also raised on the project selection criteria and how far the programme related to the non-environmental goals of UNDP.

119. The Chief of the UNDP Montreal Protocol Unit explained that while $1.2 billion had been pledged, $716 million had been received by mid-August 1998, and that the arrears remained from countries with economies in transition and eastern European countries that faced economic difficulties. During the period 1991 to 1997, however, 88 per cent of the pledged funds had been paid, to the full credit of donor Governments, who had taken urgent action on the issue. He agreed that while $716 million had been received, national programmes implemented with the help of UNDP alone specified resource needs of over $5 billion, which meant that a lot more work still remained to be done. UNDP was currently assisting Australia, Denmark, Germany, Sweden and the USA in the design and implementation of bilateral programmes in developing countries in the area. He highlighted that

the project-selection process was determined by annual business plans prepared by UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the World Bank, coordinated through the Multilateral Fund Secretariat in Montreal and then approved by the Multilateral Fund Executive Committee. The UNDP portfolio of 900 projects included those in over 400 private sector enterprises, making the programme the organization's largest with the private sector. Finally, he stressed that UNDP had over the last several years taken the lead in the design, formulation and implementation of umbrella projects covering large numbers of small- and medium-sized enterprises that would otherwise have gone bankrupt during the transition process. That had resulted in thousands of jobs being safeguarded, thus contributing to another of the priority areas of UNDP.

Global Environment Facility

120. Delegations commenting on the report complimented the professional work of UNDP as an implementing agency of the GEF. One delegation, in citing the decision of the GEF Council, held in May 1998, highlighted the importance of mainstreaming GEF activities at UNDP programmes and suggested that UNDP could give more attention to environmental policy. Another speaker requested further explanation on the process and criteria used for the selection of GEF projects. One delegation inquired about the role of the Executive Board in relation to the GEF Council.

121. The Deputy Executive Coordinator of GEF explained that the Facility served as a financial mechanism for the conventions on climate change and biodiversity and that the GEF Council had adopted operational programmes and strategies. The first criterion for eligibility was Convention ratification, the endorsement of the GEF Focal Point in the country concerned and conformity with GEF strategies and operational programmes. She stressed that the role of UNDP lay in technical cooperation and capacity-building, where it had a comparative advantage. She pointed out that UNDP had been successful in mobilizing partners at the local level, and that 80 per cent of the projects had non-governmental and local community participation. To further partnership, UNDP was currently in dialogue with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank and was exploring links with the private sector. She noted that the Executive Board had approved and cleared the GEF instrument, and that the Board would be informed of any changes. Mainstreaming was a prominent theme at the GEF Council, which had requested the implementing agencies to prepare an action plan for the May 1999 GEF Council.

Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO)

122. Several speakers commended UNSO for its positive ongoing support in the implementation of the CCD, and the establishment of the Global Mechanism. A query was raised concerning plans to fill the vacant posts in UNSO. Another delegation expressed concern about the work of UNSO in the implementation of the CCD. The speaker pointed out that UNDP had failed to introduce the work of the Convention in the round-table mechanism in three countries in West Africa. He suggested that work on the Convention should be proactive and that UNDP could consider the UNDAF as a suitable mechanism for coordination of the CCD work at the country level. A request was made for further clarification on the difference between the work of

UNSO in the implementation of the Convention in relation to that of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat. A query was raised regarding collaboration between the Global Mechanism, the Club du Sahel and the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).

123. The Assistant Administrator, BDP, announced the appointment of Mr. Philip Dobie as Director of UNSO. In responding to comments from the Executive Board, she pointed out that other posts had been frozen to allow the Director the opportunity to determine the new direction of UNSO. In his comments, the Officer-in-charge, UNSO, highlighted that a number of countries were including desertification and drought activities in their country cooperation frameworks, citing results from a recent study that indicated 23 per cent of UNDP programme countries had done so. He pointed out that while it remained a challenge to mainstream desertification activities, UNSO would intensify its work in the area and report to the Executive Board on the results. He noted that strengthening work in the area depended on the entire UNDP system, and on affected countries since there had been cases in which bilateral agreements had not targeted desertification and drought. He clarified that the activities of the UNCCD Secretariat were defined in the Convention and announced that a mini-workshop between the two organizations would be held in March 1999 on areas of overlap, domains of cooperation, and other issues. He also reiterated that a UNDP in-house task force on the Global Mechanism was being created.

United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resource Exploration

124. Several delegations commended the efforts being made by UNDP to reorient the activities of the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resource Exploration to focus more on environmental issues, capacity-building and information dissemination. However, several delegations expressed concerns about the purpose of the Fund, citing that the programme in the mineral sector seemed unnecessary since there was a very strong private sector. Other delegations requested more information on the activities of the Fund before they could endorse its continuation and called for a comprehensive review of its functions and future. The Executive Board also requested the Administrator to provide an analysis of the Fund's usefulness and continuation and to report thereon to the Board at its annual session. A suggestion was made that the Board advise the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly accordingly.

125. The Assistant Administrator responded that UNDP had taken note of the comments of the Executive Board and that an in-depth analysis of the Fund would be undertaken, given that it was not receiving funds for the year. She also highlighted the efforts the small staff of the Revolving Fund had made to reorient the activities of the fund to small-scale activities.

126. The Executive Board took note the report on the activities of the Global Environment Facility, the Montreal Protocol, the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought and the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources (DP/1999/4).

VII. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

127. The Administrator introduced conference room paper DP/1999/CRP.4 on the multi-year funding framework (MYFF), as requested in decision 98/23. He stated that the contents of the document were based on an extensive process of consultation within UNDP and with members of the Executive Board. He confirmed that the MYFF concept and format respected the principles that the Board had laid out and would be further refined through lessons learned during the implementation of decision 98/23.

128. As reflected in the conference room paper, the Administrator presented the process that would be put into place: (a) a MYFF that would incorporate a results-focused strategic framework and an integrated resource framework; (b) a results-oriented annual report (ROAR) that would be submitted to the Executive Board at its second regular session each year; and (c) a four-year report on the MYFF that would assess outcomes and outputs in a comprehensive manner. He underscored the importance of consolidating the partnership of UNDP with the Executive Board to reverse the downward trend in core resources and to restore growth in UNDP.

129. All delegations who took the floor expressed satisfaction with the way in which the MYFF process had been managed, citing transparency, thoroughness and a forward-looking vision. It was widely recognized that the MYFF process had contributed to building stronger partnerships among Executive Board members and UNDP. One delegation proposed that the inclusive, participatory approach to the MYFF process be expanded to other areas in 1999. A few delegations suggested that the MYFF process in UNDP be compatible with that of other funds and programmes, particularly UNFPA as it reported to the same Board. Another proposal was for a joint study of the MYFF format and cross-fertilization of experiences with other funds and programmes.

130. While supporting the MYFF concept and format, most delegations concurred with UNDP that adjustments to the MYFF would be necessary as UNDP learned to calibrate and match outputs and outcomes through an iterative process. Country offices were encouraged to work in close collaboration with their respective national counterparts in the identification of outputs and outcomes and in the assessment of results and impact. On the issue of incorporating non-core financed activities into determining outputs and outcomes, the Director of the Office of Planning confirmed that UNDP would do so and underscored that the first ROAR would enable UNDP to examine that issue.

131. Some delegations noted that it would be premature to introduce the MYFF rolling scheme to country offices. The Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Planning and Resource Management (BPRM) recognized that the knowledge level in country offices varied and noted that a comprehensive training package, planned for issuance in early March, would focus on the training of UNDP staff in country offices. In that regard, continuous support from headquarters as well as from the Executive Board was required. Several delegations supported the idea proposed in document DP/1999/CRP.4 of establishing a trust fund for activities aimed at enhancing the capacity of country offices. Canada stated that it would contribute to such a fund and the United Kingdom announced a commitment to contribute $300,000.

132. In order to ensure that the MYFF did not create an additional workload for country offices, several delegations underscored the need to streamline UNDP reporting requirements. Suggestions included the simplifying of reporting procedures, reducing the number of reports, including the possible elimination of the annual report of the Administrator, or the submission of biennial reports. The Assistant Administrator, BPRM, confirmed that efforts were being exerted to reduce the number of reports for which the country offices were responsible and noted that UNDP would review the arrangements for the annual report of the Administrator with the Executive Board.

133. Some delegations emphasized that programme countries should clearly identify government local office cost payments and donor countries should contribute to core resources on a predictable, assured and continuous basis in order for UNDP to fulfil its mandate. In that context, the issue of burden-sharing and diversification of the donor base of UNDP core contributions was emphasized. Several delegations expressed their support for the funding system as described in document DP/1999/CRP.4. The delegation of Sweden announced that it would announce an increase in its contribution to UNDP in 1999. One delegation announced that its Government would freeze 10 per cent of its 1999 contribution to UNDP until September, which it would then release if sufficient progress in strengthening World Bank-UNDP cooperation was seen and if the evaluation it was currently undertaking of UNDP country-level activities led to satisfactory results. To facilitate the early announcement of contributions of Executive Board members, one delegation suggested that an official letter from the Administrator be sent out to Governments, highlighting the need to announce commitments at the second regular session 1999.

134. Several delegations did not concur with the proposal to separate the pledging session from the review session of the ROAR and MYFF, underlining that the connection between the MYFF and pledges should be maintained. The Assistant Administrator, BPRM, confirmed that UNDP did not prefer to have two separate sessions and confirmed that the second regular session would be the most appropriate time to review the ROAR.

135. Several delegations sought clarification on various linkages between: (a) the strategic results framework and the integrated resources framework; (b) decision 98/1 on focus and the MYFF; (c) the MYFF and the country cooperation framework, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the common country assessment; and (d) situational indicators and MYFF indicators. The Assistant Administrator, BPRM, confirmed that a dynamic interplay between the MYFF and the focus was taking place and that the ROAR would provide data and knowledge that would form a basis on which focus could be defined. In terms of developing a synchronized cycle between MYFF and reports, the Assistant Administrator expressed difficulties in doing so as UNDP respected the cycle of programme countries and other funds and programmes and could not expect them to adjust to the UNDP MYFF cycle. The Director of the Office of Planning stressed that a clear distinction would be made between the situational indicators and the indicators in the MYFF. He also clarified that while the integrated resources framework described in document DP/1999/CRP.4 would supersede the overall planning framework incorporated in the successor programming arrangements, the Board would consider the principles guiding resource allocation separately.

136. The Director of the Division for Resource Mobilization welcomed the comments made regarding the April funding meeting. He noted that early payments by donors assisted UNDP in maximizing its resources, including through guarding against currency fluctuations. Decision 98/23 would lead to more dialogue and strategic discussion on funding arrangements, a trend welcomed by UNDP.

137. The Administrator thanked the Executive Board for its substantive, practical comments. He welcomed the continued partnership with the Board on funding and reiterated that the principles that guided UNDP were clearly spelled out in paragraph 3 of document DP/1999/CRP.4. UNDP was committed to allocating its core resources to programmes. He thanked those delegations that had made commitments to extrabudgetary resources for the training of country-office staff on the MYFF. The Administrator concluded with a plea to develop stronger momentum in the cooperation between the Board and UNDP to reverse the downward trend in contributions to core resources.

138. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

99/1. Multi-year funding framework

The Executive Board

1. Reaffirms its decision 98/23, and in this context takes note of the report of the Administrator on the multi-year funding framework (DP/1999/CRP.4);

2. Also reaffirms the need to reverse the decline in core resources and to place UNDP core funding on a predictable and continuous basis and to reach, as soon as possible, the target of $1.1 billion while recognizing the risk involved in overdependence on a limited number of donors;

3. Further reaffirms the importance of the development of the multi-year funding framework (MYFF) as an integral element of the funding strategy approved by the Board in its decision 98/23;

4. Welcomes the steps the Administrator has taken in this regard and takes note of the development of a reporting system to the Board comprising an annual results-oriented report (ROAR) and a four-yearly assessment of the multi-year funding framework (MYFFR) and requests the Administrator to continue to develop the multi-year funding framework and the reporting system in accordance with the timetable set out in paragraph 65 of document DP/1999/CRP.4, taking into account the views of the Board and fully respecting the principles contained in its decision 98/23;

5. Decides to hold the first funding session, in accordance with paragraph 12 (b) of decision 98/23, at the second regular session 1999, and requests the Administrator to make the necessary arrangements as outlined in paragraphs 52 to 63 of document DP/1999/CRP.4;

6. Requests all States members of UNDP to communicate their voluntary core contributions, as indicated in decision 98/23, and a schedule of payments, in writing, to the Secretariat by the beginning of April at the latest to facilitate efficient preparation of the funding session; and requests the Administrator to

provide for that session a record of actual core contributions and payment of government contributions to local office costs;

7. Also requests the Administrator to continue to hold open-ended, informal consultations with States members of UNDP on the further development and implementation of the multi-year funding framework;

8. Further requests the Administrator to submit the following reports as part of the further implementation of the funding strategy:

(a) An interim report to the Executive Board at its annual session 1999 on the implications of the funding strategy for the funds and programmes associated with UNDP; and

(b) A report to the Executive Board at its annual session 2000 on the proposed timing, format and content of the multi-year funding framework, including a clear indication of how the lessons learned in one multi-year funding framework cycle will be fed into the next cycle;

9. Decides to continue consideration of ways and means to redress resource shortfalls as and when necessary.

29 January 1999

VIII. FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

139. The Executive Board decided to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1999.

IX. FIELD VISITS

140. The Vice-President of the Executive Board recalled that at its third regular session 1998, the Board had agreed to postpone until the current session the review of the field visits to Bangladesh (DP/1998/CRP.13), to Tunisia and Lebanon (DP/1998/CRP.14), and to South Africa (DP/1998/CRP.15).

141. One of the rapporteurs for the field visit to Bangladesh, the rapporteur for the field visit to Tunisia and Lebanon, and one of the team coordinators for the field visit to South Africa introduced the reports on their missions. They summarized their findings, details of which were contained in the reports, and highlighted critical areas for discussion.

142. The Executive Board members who had undertaken field visits to Bangladesh, Lebanon and Tunisia, and South Africa reported that they had been impressed with the UNDP- and UNFPA-supported programmes and with the motivation and dedication of the staff in the country offices. They thanked UNFPA and UNDP for their contribution to both the organization and the content of the field visits. The reports of the field visits contained recommendations for both UNDP and UNFPA.

143. The delegations of the countries visited expressed their thanks to the Executive Board and to the participants in the field visits, each delegation highlighting achievements and concerns about the work of UNDP and UNFPA in their countries.

144. Many observations and recommendations of the missions pointed to common themes, as outlined below.

145. One mission participant noted that at times coordination could be very difficult, but that she was impressed with the quality of work of UNDP and UNFPA in the country she visited. Both UNDP and UNFPA had extensive and close cooperation network with many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the communities. The speaker believed that both UNDP and UNFPA should continue their support to strengthen human development capacity, since their presence, the speaker personally believed, made a difference.

146. One participant observed that a question that had come up many times in discussion was the choice of countries to be visited. The speaker thought that it would be good to have a dialogue about that subject in New York. One of the ideas that had come up recently was that perhaps one criterion could be to make a thematic choice - think about an issue that was high on the international development agenda and pick a country to visit that would be very much related to that theme. One suggestion had been Mali, for example, considering the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors' review. In that respect, the speaker welcomed the upcoming field visit to Brazil and noted that it was timely. On field trips in general, the speaker stated that they were an invaluable opportunity to get to know the work of the organization and that they served many purposes. Most importantly, those on the mission got to know the partner country, both at the government and grass-roots levels. In addition, the field visit was an excellent opportunity to get to know the work of UNDP and UNFPA from first-hand experience by visiting projects. Getting to know UNDP and UNFPA staff, seeing their motivation and their hard work, and engaging in long discussions with them was invaluable. Spending time with other Executive Board members was also very constructive.

147. The speaker went on to say that the Executive Board might recall that in an earlier statement her delegation commended UNFPA for inviting members of the Board to participate in country population assessments. While participation in such assessments would be quite different from participating in a field trip, at the same time it might be interesting if members of the Board also had the opportunity to see UNDP at work in such a one-to-one manner as well. While the speaker commended UNDP and UNFPA for the perfect organization of the trip to Bangladesh, she personally would have been happy and more comfortable with slightly more modest travelling arrangements. In conclusion, the speaker asked what happened to the reports just presented to the Board. She also noted that while the recommendations in the reports were very interesting and important, they were the impressions of a very intensive yet very brief visit and should be treated from that angle.

148. Another participant in a field visit stated that his visit had made possible the identification of three problems that were troubling inter-agency integration at the field level and which were deserving of the attention of the Executive

Board. First, there was a lack of integration of the agencies in sharing common expenses. Second, there was difficulty in coordinating organizations with different programmatic approaches, different institutional profiles, and different thematic areas of intervention. Third, there was a lack of support of the different headquarters when asked to fulfil the understandings made among the agencies at the field level.

149. Another participant made some more general points about field visits, following on from a previous speaker. She voiced concern about how UNDP would link the findings of the field visits to the work of the Executive Board. While she thought sessions such as the current one were valuable, she observed that improvements could be made to ensure that the field visits were not only valuable for the participants but for the Executive Board in general. The reports were impressions and reviews of a relatively small number of Board members or observers. One suggestion about the choice of countries to be visited was that the Board could consider selecting countries for which either the country programmes and country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) or mid-term reviews would be coming before the Board. In that way, the reports on field visits could provide part of the background information. As mentioned above, countries could be chosen based on specific themes while at the same time relating to forthcoming items on the UNDP agenda.

150. One delegation thanked the presenters and all the mission teams for the work they had put in to their field trip reports and for providing insight into field-level work from the perspective of the Executive Board. It was essential for the Executive Board to focus on what was happening at the field level and to know how the policies decided at the Board were translated into practice on the ground. There were a number of common themes that emerged from reading the reports - the good standing of the United Nations in general; the comparative advantages that its funds and programmes had in supporting policy dialogue, information and advocacy; building capacity; and focusing on the poor - that had been maintained despite severe cutbacks and reduced resources. She hoped that with the new funding strategy in place, reports on field visits would convey even more progress.

151. UNDP and UNFPA had shown themselves to be resourceful and innovative and they clearly played a catalytic role that was to be commended. The role of NGOs came across clearly as being critical in ensuring effectiveness. Her delegation would encourage continued and expanded collaboration between the funds and programmes in the field and national and international NGOs. Another common theme was the need for innovative approaches and increased collaboration and cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions. It was clear that the Bretton Woods institutions also needed to ensure that greater cooperation and coordination were facilitated in every way. Since her Government had an embassy in only one of the countries under consideration, the speaker said that she would confine her specific comments to that country. She went on to indicate that she did not expect a response during the current session but would speak directly with officials in the regional bureau. She agreed with other delegations' views on how the countries to be visited were to be chosen. In addition, her delegation placed great emphasis on sending members of the Board on field trips who had direct, hands-on dealings with the work of the Board. She hoped that the consideration by the Board of the field-level visits would become a regular feature of the work of

the Board. In view of the sort of practical input the reports provided and the affirmation that what UNDP and UNFPA were doing on the ground was worthwhile, delegations' input to the work on the Board achieved real value.

152. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA, thanked all those who had participated in the field visits and noted that it was important for the Executive Board members to become involved and to familiarize themselves with what was happening at the field level. She added that the experience had a positive impact in contributing to the discussions and deliberations of the Board. She stated the reports of the field visits were also useful as they provided a fresh and different perspective. On the other hand, it was also reassuring to note that participants in the field visits had identified many of the same issues that UNFPA was focusing on, including coordination, resource mobilization, partnerships with NGOs and others in civil society, and collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions. She was pleased to note that the Board members had found UNFPA programmes good and the field staff helpful. She invited the Board members to continue taking field visits. In response to a query, she noted that in South Africa the Fund was supporting programme activities at the regional level, including the strengthening of Provisional Population Units at the regional level.

153. The Deputy Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for the Arab States, UNDP, thanked the presenters and their teams for their visits. He shared the view that the visits were an extremely useful exercise. The visits had boosted the morale of the country offices, and headquarters was already getting some positive feedback. He observed that some cross-regional issues should be stressed (for example whenever there had been direct contact between members of the Board in the country offices of a region): the results were not only beneficial for Executive Board but for the offices as well. The recommendations and suggestions in the report on the mission were taken extremely seriously and were used as a tool by which to improve the quality of country programmes. He stressed that in the missions' analyses there was an important role to be played by UNDP in middle-income countries; that role was especially relevant at a time in which the transitional situation of the country required stronger development cooperation. Resources, among other things, were a very important element of support and efforts in resource mobilization were being matched to a great extent by the countries themselves.

154. The Secretary of the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA thanked the delegations for their kind comments not only on the substance but also on the organization of the field visits. She had taken note of the questions raised and the information requested would be provided. The selection of countries to be visited had been carried out in the following manner. UNDP and UNFPA consulted and then made proposals to the Bureau of the Board. The bureau decided on the final selections. Geographical distribution and rotation were criteria for the selection of countries. Variance in the types of programmes covered was considered. The secretariat also tried to consider countries where the programmes of both UNDP and UNFPA would hold interest. Of course, practical aspects were considered too; for example, whether a Resident Representative was in place at that time, whether the country was in transition, and the availability of representatives of the government. All comments on field visits were taken into consideration and the Secretary had noted the proposals to try to look for countries where there would be a country programme, CCF or review coming before

the Board. As many were already aware, the next field visit would be to Brazil. She was extremely happy to note that there would be good representation on the trip, not only of all regions, but of the donor group, which had not always been well represented. In August there would also be a visit, but the Bureau had to decide on the final selection of the countries. She stated that she had also taken note of the proposal made by one delegation to visit a country where there had been a DAC donors' review - such as Mali - the secretariat and Bureau would look into that prospect. Any further proposals Board members had to help the secretariat to improve the field visits would be welcome. The visits were especially important because they were an opportunity for everyone to view UNDP and UNFPA programmes up close and always generated an enthusiastic response by delegations.

155. The delegation of Brazil commented on the forthcoming visit of the Board to his country. The Government of Brazil and the UNDP office in Brasilia would be very happy to welcome the members of the Board. The trip would provide an opportunity to have first-hand knowledge about a development programme that had already been discussed at great length in the present forum. It was a new model of cooperation, based primarily on the use of non-core and national cooperation resources.

156. The Executive Board took note of the reports on the field visits to Bangladesh (DP/1998/CRP.13), Tunisia and Lebanon (DP/1998/CRP.14), and South Africa (DP/1998/CRP.15).

UNFPA segment

X. COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

157. The Executive Board had before it two proposed country programmes: Assistance to the Government of Burundi (DP/FPA/BDI/4); and Assistance to the Government of Madagascar (DP/FPA/MDG/4). As no requests for discussion had been received, and in accordance with decision 97/12, the Board approved the two country programmes before it without discussion.

158. Several delegations praised the two country programmes for being well designed and well balanced and were pleased to observe that there had been noteworthy collaboration among the Government, donors, and civil society, including NGOs, in the Country Population Assessment (CPA) exercises undertaken in Burundi and Madagascar. One delegation welcomed the special attention that would be given to addressing the reproductive health needs of men and adolescents in Madagascar. The delegation also expressed appreciation for the flexibility built into the Burundi programme. The same delegation noted that its Government was temporarily suspending assistance to Burundi. Another delegation underscored the high quality of both country programmes. The same delegation welcomed the realistic objectives and the emphasis on improved coordination delineated in the country programme for Madagascar. The delegation announced that its Government would grant 5 million French francs for programme implementation in Madagascar and added that a similar amount would be provided to Côte d'Ivoire. The same delegation stated that it approved of the strategy adopted in the Burundi country programme and was pleased to note the suspension of economic sanctions against

that country. Another delegation thanked the Executive Director for her deep commitment to the countries of Africa and for her tireless efforts in seeking to mobilize resources. The delegation thanked UNFPA for the quality programmes designed for Burundi and Madagascar and went on to urge donors to increase their contributions to UNFPA.

159. The delegation of Burundi thanked the Executive Board for approving the programme of assistance to the Government of Burundi in the amount of $8 million for the period 1999-2001 and noted that it represented good news for the people of Burundi. The delegation added that the programme had been developed with the full cooperation of the Government and in collaboration with civil society. The delegation referred to a meeting of donors held earlier in January in New York, organized by the Government of Canada and UNDP, and added that on 23 January, in Arusha, the United Republic of Tanzania, the East African Heads of State had agreed to lift the economic sanctions imposed against Burundi. The same delegation called upon donors to extend generous financial support to the programme in Burundi and to thereby help to ensure its success.

160. The delegation of Madagascar thanked the Executive Board for approving the programme of assistance to the Government of Madagascar in the amount of $14.4 million for the period 1999-2003, and noted that the programme had been developed with the close collaboration of the Government and civil society and had taken into account national development objectives and the national demographic policy. While thanking various donors for their financial support, the delegation underscored that the programme would be an effective tool in combating poverty.

161. The Director, Africa Division, thanked the delegations for their positive and supportive comments and, in particular, expressed her appreciation to the two Executive Board members who had participated in the CPAs. She noted that the contributions of the two members had been very valuable to the CPA exercise. She also thanked the Governments of Burundi and Madagascar for their support, close collaboration and involvement in the CPA process that had culminated in the design of the two country programmes that had just been approved. She added that such collaboration ensured ownership by the respective Governments. She thanked the delegation of France for announcing the financial support that its Government would provide for the Madagascar country programme. In stating that she had taken note of another delegation's announcement that its Government had temporarily suspended assistance to Burundi, the Director expressed the hope that with the recent lifting of sanctions, the delegation's Government would soon resume its support. She concluded by noting that UNFPA looked forward to working closely with the concerned Governments and donors in the two programme countries.

162. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) also thanked the delegations for their positive comments. She stated that it had been very beneficial to have had members of the Executive Board participate in the CPAs. She welcomed further participation by the Board members in future CPAs and noted that a preliminary list of upcoming CPAs has been made available during the current session. She recalled that the CPA exercise differed from its predecessor, the Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD) exercise. Unlike the PRSD, the CPA did not focus on a mission but involved an analytical process over a period of time and included the participation and collaboration of Government, donors and civil society in the exercise. She added that, in line with the Board's decision, information about

forthcoming CPAs would be shared with all members of UNFPA so that those who so desired could review the CPA recommendations.

163. The Executive Director noted that UNFPA was focusing greater attention to the issue of male involvement in reproductive health and the subject was a key area of concern in the ICPD+5 review and assessment process. She added that the Fund was considering organizing a side event on the subject at the Preparatory Committee of the CPD.

XI. OTHER MATTERS

Coordinating Committee on Health

164. The Executive Board authorized the Bureau to approve the nomination from the Western Europe and Other States group for a member and an alternate to serve on the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health for a one-year term, with the nomination to be confirmed at the second regular session 1999.

Closing statements

165. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration), speaking on behalf of the Executive Director, thanked the Executive Board for getting off to a fine start for 1999. UNFPA was impressed with the Board's efficient and business-like manner and the constructive attitude that had characterized its deliberations during the session. The Fund was pleased that the issue of resources was at the forefront of the Board's concerns for the year. The Board's support was indispensable in that area and UNFPA was thankful for the Board's vision and innovativeness in conceiving the multi-year funding framework and for its commitment to putting the framework into operation. UNFPA looked forward to working with the Board over the next two years in developing the Fund's multi-year funding framework and bringing it to fruition. In that regard, the Deputy Executive Director informed the Board that the Executive Director would be able to guide UNFPA through the process, as the Secretary-General had extended her appointment through 31 December 2000.

Tribute to Mr. Rafeeuddin Ahmed

166. The Vice President, H. E. Dr. John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda), read a statement on behalf of the Executive Board to extend the best wishes of the Board to Mr. Rafeeuddin Ahmed and his family as he left the post of Associate Administrator of UNDP. Mr. Ahmed had enjoyed a long and distinguished career in the United Nations and had brought his wisdom and experience to UNDP. His dedication to development and especially to the interests of programme countries and to the staff of UNDP was greatly appreciated. The Board would miss his presence greatly. The Vice President then asked the Board to join him in a show of appreciation for Mr. Ahmed.

Administrator's remarks

167. The Administrator stated that the session had been extremely important and productive. Two landmark decisions had been adopted: on the multi-year funding

framework and on the successor programming arrangements. On behalf of UNDP, he underlined how much he appreciated the spirit of partnership in adopting the key legislation that would guide UNDP in the years to come. UNDP was committed to upholding the outcome of those decisions and to concrete results. However, he emphasized, UNDP needed to reach the level of resources that had been agreed on collegially or it would find itself in a difficult situation. In that regard, he stated, the utmost must be done for the April funding meeting as it offered a unique opportunity to demonstrate commitment to implementing the legislation and to reversing the negative trend in contributions to core resources. He noted the other issues that the Executive Board had taken up during the week, including at the joint meeting with UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, which presented an opportunity for an exchange on country-level operations. The discussion on field visits had demonstrated that UNDP was making a difference at the country level. He took the opportunity to salute those international and national staff members who worked at the country level, often in difficult circumstances.

168. The Administrator thanked the Vice Presidents who had chaired the meetings in place of the President, to whom best wishes for a speedy recovery were extended. He thanked the Vice President for his words on the outgoing Associate Administrator and extended his best wishes to Mr. Ahmed for the future.

XII. JOINT MEETING OF THE UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF AND WFP EXECUTIVE BOARDS

A. Major areas of concerted action for 1999

Resource flows, follow-up to international conferences, the resident coordinator system

169. The Administrator, UNDP, stated that he hoped the joint meetings in future would function more as a joint review board for the activities of particular country teams, as it was important for their focus to be on country-level issues. The United Nations was consistently successful in the field of operational activities, including both humanitarian and development-related interventions. He applauded General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998 on the triennial policy review, which he said reflected a profound sense of the reality of work at the country level. In particular, the resolution supported the work of the members of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) at the country level. He was pleased with the guidance provided by the resolution on so many important aspects of operational activities.

170. With regard to the resident coordinator system, he noted that there had been much progress in the past year. As funder and manager of the resident coordinator system, UNDP had worked to strengthen the system and appreciated the support from UNDG partners. A successful competency assessment exercise of 40 resident coordinator candidates had taken place for the first time. Following the competency assessment, the first meeting of the Inter-Agency Advisory Panel had shortlisted candidates for each open resident coordinator position. In real progress towards broadening the base of resident coordinators, 21 out of 130 were now from outside UNDP, as compared with 1993 when there had been only one. Currently, 21 per cent of resident coordinators were women, compared with 10 per cent in 1993.

171. A strengthened resident coordinator system was invaluable in the joint effort to promote coherent and cohesive country-level action by the United Nations as mandated by the Secretary-General, he said. The Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) had produced a second guidance note to the resident coordinator system with regard to the follow-up to global conferences. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was an ideal tool to ensure country-level follow-up to conferences.

172. The Administrator added that General Assembly resolution 53/192 devoted 10 paragraphs to funding, an issue that was of the highest priority. The steady decline in official development assistance (ODA) must be halted. Since 1992, core contributions to UNDP and ODA both had declined by 20 per cent. He noted that the multi-year funding frameworks were under discussion in the Executive Boards.

Monitoring and evaluation, use of common indicators

173. The Executive Director, UNFPA, focused primarily on issues related to monitoring and evaluation, including indicators. She said that monitoring and evaluation were an important part of General Assembly resolution 53/192 on the triennial policy review. The funds and programmes agreed on the importance of reviewing and assessing what was being done in operational activities and documenting the results. They also all recognized the need to be more analytical about successes and weaknesses and to collect lessons learned and feed them back into future programming.

174. She said it was useful to recall a number of points. The funds and programmes were not starting from scratch; they all had long-standing expertise and experience in those areas. Moreover, there was coordination in monitoring and evaluation, especially at the field level, but it had not been well documented. The system-wide Inter-agency Working Group on Evaluation provided a useful forum to exchange technical information on substantive and methodological issues, and CCPOQ had harmonized monitoring and evaluation procedures in the United Nations system. The development of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the UNDAF had helped to prepare the ground for significantly improved coordination and collaboration in that area. Also, the UNDG members had reviewed reporting forms to see how they could be simplified; discussed ways to harmonize training of national counterparts in capacity-building and results-based budgeting; and reviewed matters related to national execution and sector-wide approaches.

175. She said that the CCA and UNDAF provided a significant opportunity to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation components of programmes. The CCA established a baseline to measure progress, a database and a list of agreed common indicators. It also required that steps be taken to strengthen the country's capacity to collect, analyse and use data. If the CCAs accomplished even part of that ambitious agenda, they would provide, for the first time, a solid basis to undertake monitoring and evaluation that was planned and agreed by all concerned parties. An overriding concern was to strengthen the longer- term capacity of countries in that area. UNDAF guidelines contained an important component on monitoring and evaluation that called for a monitoring and evaluation plan and foresaw more joint exercises at regular intervals.

176. The Executive Director said it was of utmost importance that the United Nations system agreed on a common set of indicators for a given country. This was possible because of the work that had been done in a number of forums, including the Inter-agency Task Force on Basic Social Services for All (BSSA) and the United Nations Statistical Commission, and in the development of the CCA and UNDAF. The new CCA indicator frameworks took into account the key outcome indicators in previous lists, notably the 15 social sector indicators of the Minimum National Social Data Set and the 11 key development indicators of the BSSA Task Force. In developing the CCA indicator framework, the United Nations had been mindful of the need not to add to countries' reporting burdens, to ensure country ownership of the indicators and to strengthen local statistical capacity.

177. She concluded by noting a number of other issues relating to harmonization of policies and procedures that the UNDG members would address in the months ahead. For example, they would closely monitor progress in harmonizing programming cycles, for which it had provided guidance and instructions to country offices. UNDG members would also be taking a fresh look at the programming procedures of each organization in the context of the implementation of the CCA and UNDAF with a view to streamlining and simplifying them further.

Harmonization of programme cycles; common premises and services; the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the Common Country Assessment

178. The Executive Director, UNICEF said that harmonization of programme cycles was key to the introduction and effectiveness of UNDAF and that the heads of the funds and programmes had asked all offices to harmonize their programme cycles by 2003. To date, 39 countries were harmonized and another 49 would soon have agreements to do so. The funds and programmes were also looking at countries where their cycles were off by just one year. In Colombia and Paraguay, for example, where the UNICEF programmes were scheduled to end in 1999, UNICEF would prepare two-year programmes in order to harmonize the cycles with those of the other agencies. Having synchronized programme cycles would both create the necessary preconditions for the successful implementation of UNDAF and improve the complementarity of agencies' programmes. There were still some outstanding issues, however:

(a) The programme cycles of United Nations agencies would have to coincide with government planning periods, although with an increase in "rolling plans" and the wide range of planning cycles, in every case full synchronization might not be possible;

(b) In order to ensure continuing synchronization of cycles, there must be agreement on the length of future programming cycles. That would take into account both government planning cycles and the agencies' own internal, including Board-mandated, processes. The issue was on the workplan of the UNDG agencies in 1999;

(c) There were a number of countries where there were difficult circumstances, such as conflict, or where agencies had multi-country programmes covering different configurations of countries, or where the programme cycles were out of synchronization by more than one year. In these cases, the United Nations

country teams had been asked to work with headquarters to prepare a plan of action to move towards harmonization.

179. Concerning common premises, she said that currently, there were seven United Nations Houses that had been inaugurated by the Secretary-General, with a further 23 to be designated formally on an appropriate occasion in the coming months. In 14 additional countries, some combination of UNDG members shared premises. The UNDG subgroup on common premises, chaired by UNICEF, would evaluate a further 20 locations each year for the next three years. The extent to which United Nations Houses would be established would depend on the evaluation and the availability of funding.

180. As for common services, she said, with support from key donors, the subgroup had begun to analyze common service practices and would build a data base of best practices that country teams would be encouraged to adopt. However, much was happening at the country level. In Honduras, for example, which had a United Nations House, a cooperation agreement had been signed by the agencies that detailed the use and management of common services. In Guatemala, UNICEF estimated that the development of common and shared services had reduced budgeted administration and travel costs. Shared or common services were in place in all counties with a United Nations House and in many others, including India, the Philippines and Zimbabwe, country teams were developing enhanced means of cooperation.

181. The pilot phase of the UNDAF exercise had been assessed in a number of ways, she said. The UNDG agencies had carried out an internal review which was complemented by a review by an external group of "eminent persons". Individual agencies, including UNICEF, had carried out their own analyses. The pilot phase had culminated in a system-wide consultation held in Princeton, New Jersey in November 1998. In addition to the need for harmonization of programme cycles, the review highlighted the need to: (a) ensure full government participation and ownership; (b) carry out a thorough CCA and analysis as an essential precondition of the UNDAF; and (c) revise the existing provisional guidelines and global support system, emphasizing regional support networks and drawing on the experience of the pilot phase.

182. On the basis of those reviews, UNDG members had agreed on proposals for the expansion of UNDAF. The UNDG Subgroup on Programme Policies, chaired by UNICEF, was charged with the responsibility of drafting the new guidelines for the CCA, UNDAF and the global support system. The initial drafts were completed in December 1998 and circulated to all country teams in the pilot countries and to country teams that had completed the CCA exercise. All UNDG members including the regional commissions, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Bank and the specialized agencies had been asked for their comments. The subgroup aimed to complete the second draft in early February; once they were approved by the UNDG members, the guidelines would be issued to all country teams by early March. While the final roll-out plan could only be determined once it was clear which countries would have completed the CCA process and have harmonized programme cycles, preliminary indications were that some 50 countries should have embarked on the exercise by the end of 2000. All countries were encouraged to start the CCA process, however.

183. There were still a number of issues to be addressed, she said. Adding a CCA and an UNDAF to the individual programme development processes of each fund or programme simply was not feasible. Each agency would review the impact on its process and for its part, UNICEF would have within the next few months proposals for discussion on how to adopt its programming process to this new reality. A second issue was how to apply and adapt the UNDAF to countries in conflict and how it was linked to the Strategic Framework.

Links between development and humanitarian operations

184. The Deputy Executive Director, WFP, said that one of the reasons that it was difficult to incorporate development initiatives in relief operations was their time frame, which for an emergency operation typically was a few months. Follow-on phases had to be planned almost simultaneously. During the first phase, it was almost impossible to identify a development possibility, invite potential partners to prepare proposals, engage personnel and place them in the field, build confidence with the local community and start the development work. WFP could assure development partners like NGOs only very short-term funding and as a result, it was not always easy to find qualified partners who were prepared to work on this basis.

185. Another difficulty was that staying too long in a pure relief phase could create distortions in economic structures, impede the rebuilding process and delay the emergence of locally-based food supply systems, he said. Thus, it was important to move as soon as possible to a recovery stage by reducing the general distribution of free food while still targeting the most vulnerable. As the overall costs of the operation declined, however, sometimes dramatically, the balance between the programme support costs and the programme deliverables changed. Viewed in those narrow terms, the operation appeared more costly and sometimes it was difficult to convince donors that operations were not becoming less efficient.

186. In 1998, the WFP Executive Board agreed that with few exceptions, a recovery strategy would be prepared within 18 months of the beginning of a relief operation. WFP, however, should begin introducing recovery approaches when the opportunity arose, even prior to the formulation of a recovery strategy. The Board also revised an existing category of programme activities to enable WFP to undertake development activities identified in the recovery strategy, using contributions from either or both the relief and development budget lines of donors. That programme category included a contingency mechanism to respond to possible setbacks, reversals and new emergencies or disasters. The adaptation was now established and had been used in Cambodia, Central America, the Great Lakes region of Africa, Somalia and Iraq.

187. The Executive Board had approved other policies, including continuing to work with partners through such inter-agency mechanisms as the Strategic Framework, the Consolidated Appeals Process and UNDAF; maximizing local inputs and participation; involving women in programme design, implementation and monitoring; strengthening local and national institutions and capacities; reinforcing pockets of stability during crises; engaging with civil society; and helping people to cope with crisis.

Discussion

188. A number of delegations spoke about the significance of the joint session itself within the context of United Nations reform, although it was suggested that in future, the joint sessions should focus on fewer topics.

189. Many speakers expressed continued support for the UNDAF as a means of strengthening United Nations programmes at country level through improved coordination and use of resources. CCAs were considered an important, crucial first step in elaborating the UNDAF, which was also seen as a means of implementing the programmes of the international conferences. Delegations were encouraged by the progress made to date and by the commitment of the funds and programmes to the exercise, especially to harmonizing programme cycles and simplifying programming procedures. It was suggested that a broader range of partners, including the specialized agencies and the international financial institutions (IFIs), would increase the effectiveness of UNDAF. The need for ownership of process by programme countries was stressed by many delegations. Speakers were encouraged by improvements in the resident coordinator system, especially the broadened pool of candidates and the new selection process.

190. A speaker said that there had been a decline in resources for development and that harmonization was a means of reducing duplication and increasing cost-effectiveness through such means as common premises. However, cost-cutting was not an end in itself. What was needed was the implementation of agreed projects in developing countries. Another speaker suggested that the Executive Heads of the funds and programmes issue a joint statement on resource flows to highlight the importance of the matter. It was also suggested that resident coordinators seek resources in programme countries through strategic alliances. The Executive Director, UNFPA, agreed that there was a need for a joint statement on resource mobilization but suggested that it specify what those resources could accomplish. The Administrator, UNDP, also supported the idea of a joint statement on resource flows.

191. On UNDAF, delegations asked about the possibility of joint programming and reporting; about what programming instruments could be eliminated and whether there were as yet ideas about how simplified programming procedures would work. It was also asked if the funds and programmes were contemplating reporting on the activities of Governments and of multilateral and bilateral donors. Questions were raised about the involvement of the World Bank in the UNDAF exercise. Some speakers raised questions about CCAs, with one asking if they could be made available to other development partners. The delegation of one of the UNDAF pilot countries said that the CCA would enhance the development partnership between the United Nations agencies, programme countries and the Bretton Woods institutions, in line with the need for national execution and ownership of the process.

192. The Administrator, UNDP, said that at the country level, it could be a long time before the individuality of funds and programmes was lost. However, the programming process did have to be simplified. As an example, UNDP was prepared to drop its advisory note in any country where the UNDAF was in place. The UNDG subgroups on programme policies and operation were exploring ways of simplifying procedures and harmonization. At the country level, the United Nations family needed coordination that would include the funds and programmes and the

specialized agencies, allowing them to merge their modest resources in joint, parallel strategies that supported the country's agenda while providing a "big table" for the Bretton Woods Institutions and the IFIs. The resident coordinator system provided a platform for coordination at the country level. Collaborative programming had been successful in certain instances, as in Burundi, but in general problems remained owing to the obligation of separate reporting arrangements.

193. The Executive Director, UNFPA, said that there was a strong commitment to UNDAF but it was important to maintain the identities of the funds and programmes, which were needed for fund-raising. There were many examples of joint assistance at country level that did not involve all UNDG members, including the United Nations initiative on adolescent health in Botswana, which involved UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO; and the collaboration between UNDP, UNFPA and bilateral donors on the 1998 population census in Malawi. There was a question as to whether all agencies should participate in every initiative, as that could result in a "shopping list" of activities. First, the United Nations should assess with a Government what its priorities were and then invite the necessary agencies to participate.

194. The Executive Director, UNICEF, said there must be a balance between the distinctiveness of agencies and coordination. The UNDAF was a planning framework that brought coherence and value to the United Nations interventions and interactions with countries, thus avoiding having too many priorities. Concerning reporting, she reported to the UNICEF Executive Board through a variety of reports, including mid-term reviews and other country programme documentation. Also available to the UNDG agencies were the reports of the resident coordinators and the annual reports of each agency.

195. A delegation said that in many cases, countries' socio-economic progress was hindered by obligations to the IFIs. The effectiveness of the United Nations system in meeting the development challenge would benefit from their willingness to take into account the UNDAF analysis. He asked what was the reaction of the IFIs to CCAs and the resident coordinator system and what action could be taken to strengthen cooperation with the IFIs at the country level. The Executive Director, UNFPA, said that once a good CCA had been completed, it provided an opportunity to involve Ministries of Finance in the work of the United Nations system. The Executive Director, UNICEF, said that CCAs involved all development partners and in some countries, for example Malawi and Ghana, the World Bank had signed the UNDAF. The Administrator, UNDP, said that discussions were under way between the UNDG members and the World Bank with regard to a new partnership approach.

196. A speaker said that more coordination was needed in emergencies and asked about the intentions of UNDG members to pursue that goal. Another asked the Executive Heads of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to address the transition from relief to development. The Administrator, UNDP, said that UNDAF could be used to broaden the work of the United Nations in the humanitarian fields. The Deputy Executive Director, WFP, said that in 1998, both the humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council and the triennial policy review had addressed joint work by United Nations partners. There were other forms of cooperation, including working groups, joint assessment missions, the establishment of memoranda of understanding

and the inter-agency mechanisms. The Strategic Framework for Afghanistan was an example of coordination. At the country level, there was no reason why the humanitarian aspects of development should not be included in the CCA and UNDAF exercises.

197. The Executive Director, UNICEF, said that of the 18 UNDAF pilot countries, none were complex emergencies. Issues that remained to be addressed included the question of the Strategic Framework or UNDAF in cases where there was no functioning government. Relief and development were both part of the humanitarian response, but donors' definitions of related terms could improve. For example, health was considered a humanitarian response but not education, even though education was key to assisting children in conflict.

198. A speaker said that UNDP had been engaged in some countries in such activities as mine-clearance and assistance to returnees, and asked that as manager of the resident coordinator system, UNDP respond more actively to such needs. The representative of Lebanon cited the importance of post-conflict peace-building, mentioning his own country's experience, and asked how such work could be coordinated and studied for lessons learned. The Executive Director, UNFPA, said that she had visited Lebanon and been impressed by the convergence of relief, rehabilitation/construction and development activities taking place, all involving the private sector, NGOs and bilateral donors. The Administrator, UNDP, said that the International Peace Academy was studying lessons learned from peace-building that could be shared.

199. Concerning follow-up to the international conferences, a delegation said that the Economic and Social Council had held a session on integrated follow-up and asked if UNDG had taken up the issue. The Deputy Executive Director, WFP, said that a joint, coordinated response would be helpful, as it would allow agencies to focus on the conferences that were appropriate to them. A speaker asked about experience to date in integrating follow-up to global conferences with national priorities. The Administrator, UNDP, said that one of the best analyses along those lines had been done by the United Nations country team in Pakistan, which had addressed how national goals coincided with the goals of the conferences. He said that the ACC agreement on poverty eradication was an example of how to build effectively on the outcomes of conferences.

200. Referring to a recent visit to Sierra Leone, a speaker asked the Executive Heads to address the follow-up by UNDG to the Secretary-General's report on Africa, specifically how the report's conclusions were being applied at field level. The Deputy Executive Director, WFP, said that Sierra Leone was an example of a country for which there had been high hopes for relief and development, but which had returned to crisis. The Executive Director, UNICEF, said that UNDG had provided input to the Secretary-General's report and that the ACC had highlighted the importance of follow-up. UNDG had prepared a matrix of follow-up activity which had been sent to all country offices, and the process would be reviewed periodically. The CCAs, UNDAFs and specific reports also took into account the priority for Africa.

201. A speaker asked about the possibility of including a wider range of participants from civil society, especially NGOs, in the UNDAF process. The

Executive Director, UNICEF, said that in most UNDAF pilot countries, there had been some type of involvement of civil society.

202. A delegation said that the development of common indicators was an area in which the United Nations could contribute to the development process. These indicators were very useful in identifying the progress made by United Nations programmes. The speaker asked how other partners were participating in the development and use of common indicators. Another delegation asked to what extent national Governments were involved in the development of the indicators. The Executive Director, UNFPA, said that the United Nations system had done much work in that area. There was agreement on the use of common indicators at the country level, with the their applicability depending on a country's level of development. Programmes did not have to address every indicator. The indicators would be used for benchmarks to develop analytical systems required to monitor progress.

203. A delegation asked about country-level collaboration in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa. The Executive Director, UNFPA, said that in Botswana, a United Nations theme group was preparing a national priority programme to address HIV/AIDS control. There was also a programme for young people's health that involved bilateral donors.

204. In closing, the Executive Director, UNICEF, said that the UNDAF, while still posing many challenges, had provided many benefits. It was still early in the process, which had begun in the middle of countries' programming processes. There was now more cohesive teams at the country level, and UNDAF brought to the programming process such fundamental issues as human rights and child rights, raising them as systemic, rather than single-agency issues. There was a better analysis of country situations, as for example in Viet Nam, where United Nations activities were focused on poorer areas, or Mozambique, where agencies were working with the Government in developing programmes for HIV/AIDS. The original challenge had been to clarify the role of the Government and to involve agencies not working in the country. There was still a need to reduce the programming process.

205. The Executive Director, UNFPA, said that the common goal of the United Nations system should be to respond specifically to countries' needs at the country level.

206. The Administrator, UNDP, said that UNDAF should be the most effective framework at the country level. It would, however, take several years to roll out completely. Guidelines on the CCA and UNDAF would be presented to the ACC at its spring 1999 session. The UNDAF should not become a canopy for disparate and individual programmes. He said he would like UNDAF to be a common programme document that replaced and consolidated all programming instruments. At present, he favoured bringing the Bretton Woods institutions into strategic arrangements at the country level rather that including them in the UNDAF process. In that regard, one factor was that the World Bank did not recognize the resident coordinator as its coordinator at the country level. Finally, he said that there had been a major overhaul of UNDP in recent years, as well in the United Nations itself, although the expected support from donors had not been forthcoming. The United Nations - a "precious asset" for Member States, needed to have more to be able to do more. He stressed the need for growth in assured and predictable

resources for development. In the end, States were responsible for the development work of the United Nations.

B. Harmonization of budgets

207. On behalf of the three organizations, the UNICEF Comptroller presented the second report on "Harmonization of Budgets: UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF" (DP/1999/6; DP/FPA/1999/1; E/ICEF/AB/L.2) and expressed appreciation for the constructive comments provided by the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report (DP/1999/7; DP/FPA/1999/3; E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.4).

208. The Comptroller reiterated the continuing commitment of the three organizations to work together to ensure that a harmonized approach to their support budgets , the format of which would continue to be modified to reflect not only identified improvements, but also new requirements as they emerged. She recalled the efforts leading to the harmonized proposal which concentrated on the development of comparable and transparent budget information, while preserving the unique nature and requirements of each organization. In other words, she said that harmonization meant more similarity but did not mean sameness.

209. For the benefit of delegations that had not participated in previous discussions of the subject, she briefly described the definitions of Programme, Programme Support and Management and Administration. She also described the two major changes proposed in the report. The executive summary had been reorganized to move the resource plan as the first table to be presented and to make the financial framework the first section under the executive summary. Also, a new table summarized key areas of savings and how the savings were redirected. All tables would show gross and net budget figures, but approval would still be made on the proposed gross budget.

210. Asked to clarify gross and net support budgets, the Comptroller said that the gross support budget reflected the total activities the organization would carry out, and the net support budget was the result of deducting the income to the budget. Each organization would explain this clearly in its respective budget document.

211. A delegation asked whether the information provided to ACABQ concerning a detailed breakdown of staff costs and operating expenses would also be made available to members of the Executive Boards on request. The Comptroller said that each organization would provide any information requested by ACABQ. Another speaker endorsed the inclusion of the item "government local office cost contribution" as income to the budget.

99/3. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session 1999

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the first regular session 1999 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Elected the following members of the Bureau for 1999:

President	:	H.E. Mr. Asda Jayanama (Thailand)
Vice-President	:	Ms. Jana Simonova (Czech Republic)
Vice-President	:	H.E. Dr. John W. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)
Vice-President	:	Ms. Anne Barrington (Ireland)
Vice-President	:	Mr. Aboubacar Dione (Guinea)

Approved the agenda and work plan for its first regular session 1999 (DP/1999/L.1) as orally amended;

Approved the report of the third regular session 1998 (DP/1999/1);

Approved the annual work plan 1999 for the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board as orally amended;

Agreed to reschedule its second regular session 1999 from 5-9 April 1999 to 12-16 April 1999;

Agreed to the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in 1999:

Second regular session 1999:	12-16 April 1999
Annual session 1999:	14-25 June 1999 (New York)
Third regular session 1999:	13-17 September 1999

Agreed to the following tentative schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in 2000:

First regular session 2000:	24-28 January 2000
Second regular session 2000:	27-31 March 2000
Annual session 2000:	12-23 June 2000 (Geneva)
Third regular session 2000:	11-15 September 2000

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the second regular session 1999 of the Board, as listed in the annex to the present decision;

UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT

ITEM 2: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BOARD OF AUDITORS

Took note of the UNDP report on an updated overview of implementation of recommendations of the Board of Auditors, including an updated timetable (DP/1999/3);

Took note of the UNFPA report on an updated overview of implementation of recommendations of the Board of Auditors (DP/FPA/1999/2);

UNDP SEGMENT

ITEM 3: UNDP 2001

Took note of the progress report on the implementation of change management (DP/1999/CRP.2);

ITEM 4: COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS

Adopted decision 99/2 of 29 January 1999 on successor programming arrangements;

Approved the following country cooperation frameworks:

First country cooperation framework for Kenya (DP/CCF/KEN/1);
First country cooperation framework for Madagascar (DP/CCF/MAG/1);
First country cooperation framework for Niger (DP/CCF/NER/1);
First country cooperation framework for Suriname (DP/CCF/SUR/1);
First country cooperation framework for Tajikistan (DP/CCF/TAJ/1);

ITEM 5: UNDP: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Took note of the oral presentations on key areas of communication needs and of the comments made thereon by delegations;

ITEM 6: SPECIAL FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

Took note of the report on activities of the Global Environment Facility, the Montreal Protocol, the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO) and the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration (DP/1999/4);

ITEM 7: RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Adopted decision 99/1 of 29 January 1999 on a UNDP multi-year funding framework;

ITEM 8: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Decided to postpone consideration of this item to the second regular session 1999;

ITEM 9: FIELD VISITS

Took note of the reports on the field visits to Bangladesh (DP/1998/CRP.13), Tunisia and Lebanon (DP/1998/CRP.14) and South Africa (DP/1998/CRP.15);

UNFPA SEGMENT

ITEM 10: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

Approved the following country programmes:

Assistance to the Government of Burundi (DP/FPA/BDI/4);
Assistance to the Government of Madagascar (DP/FPA/MDG/4);

ITEM 11: OTHER MATTERS

Authorized the Bureau to approve the nomination from the Western Europe and Other States group for a member and an alternate to serve on the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health for a one-year term, with the nomination to be confirmed at the second regular session 1999.

ITEM 12: JOINT MEETING OF THE UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF AND WFP EXECUTIVE BOARDS

Held a joint meeting with presentations made on areas of concerted action in 1999 and on the proposed revised format for the future biennial support budget, including the report thereon of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (DP/1996/6-DP/FPA/1999/1-E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.2; DP/1999/7-DP/FPA/1999/3- E/ICEF/1999/AB/L.4).

29 January 1999

Annex

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNDP/UNFPA
WORKPLAN 1999

Second regular session 1999 (12-16 April 1999)
(5 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time llotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1999/L.2)	A		Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents
	Official	A		Report on the first regular session 1999
	Official	I		Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session 1999
			½ day	
				JOINT UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT
2				REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
	Official	A		
3				COMMON PREMISES AND SERVICES
	CRP	I		Progress report
4				STATEMENTS ON FUNDING COMMITMENTS TO UNDP AND UNFPA
	CRP	I	1 day	
				UNFPA SEGMENT
5				COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	½ day	

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time allotted	Item and subject
6				TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES
	Official	I	½ day	Progress report on the effectiveness of improvements in the operation of the Technical Support Services system (98/6)
				SECTOR-WIDE APPROACHES
7	CRP	I		
8				ICPD+5
	CRP	I	½ day	Progress report on ICPD+5 process, including the outcome of The Hague International Forum
9				RESOURCE MOBILIZATION
	CRP	I	½ day	Follow-up to decision 98/24 on UNFPA funding strategy
10				EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE
	Official	I	½ day	UNFPA assistance in emergency situations
				UNDP SEGMENT
11				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	A	½ day	Risk management
				COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
12	Official	A		Country cooperation frameworks
13			½ day	OTHER MATTERS

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; I = information.